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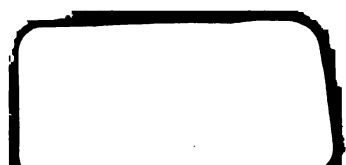
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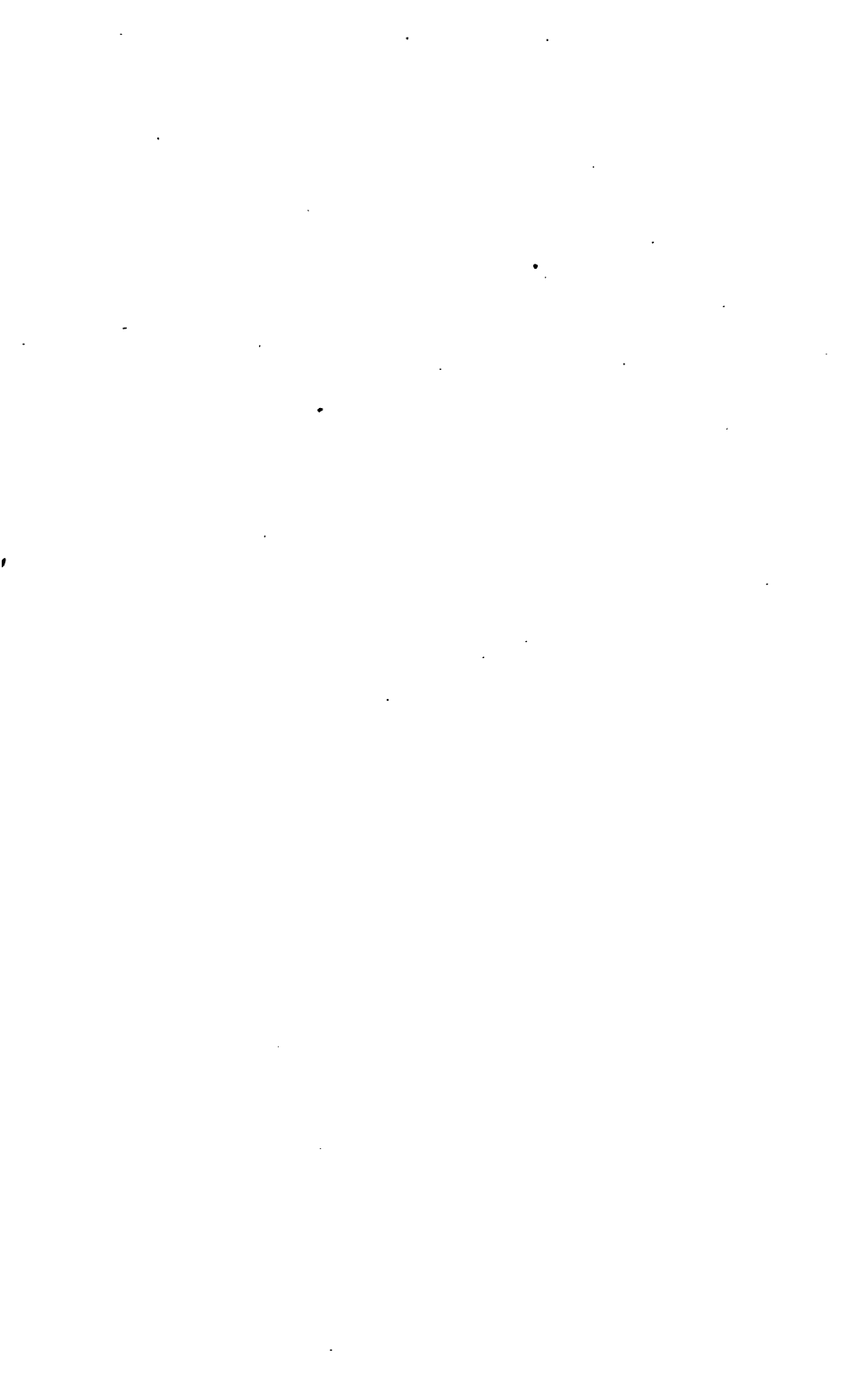
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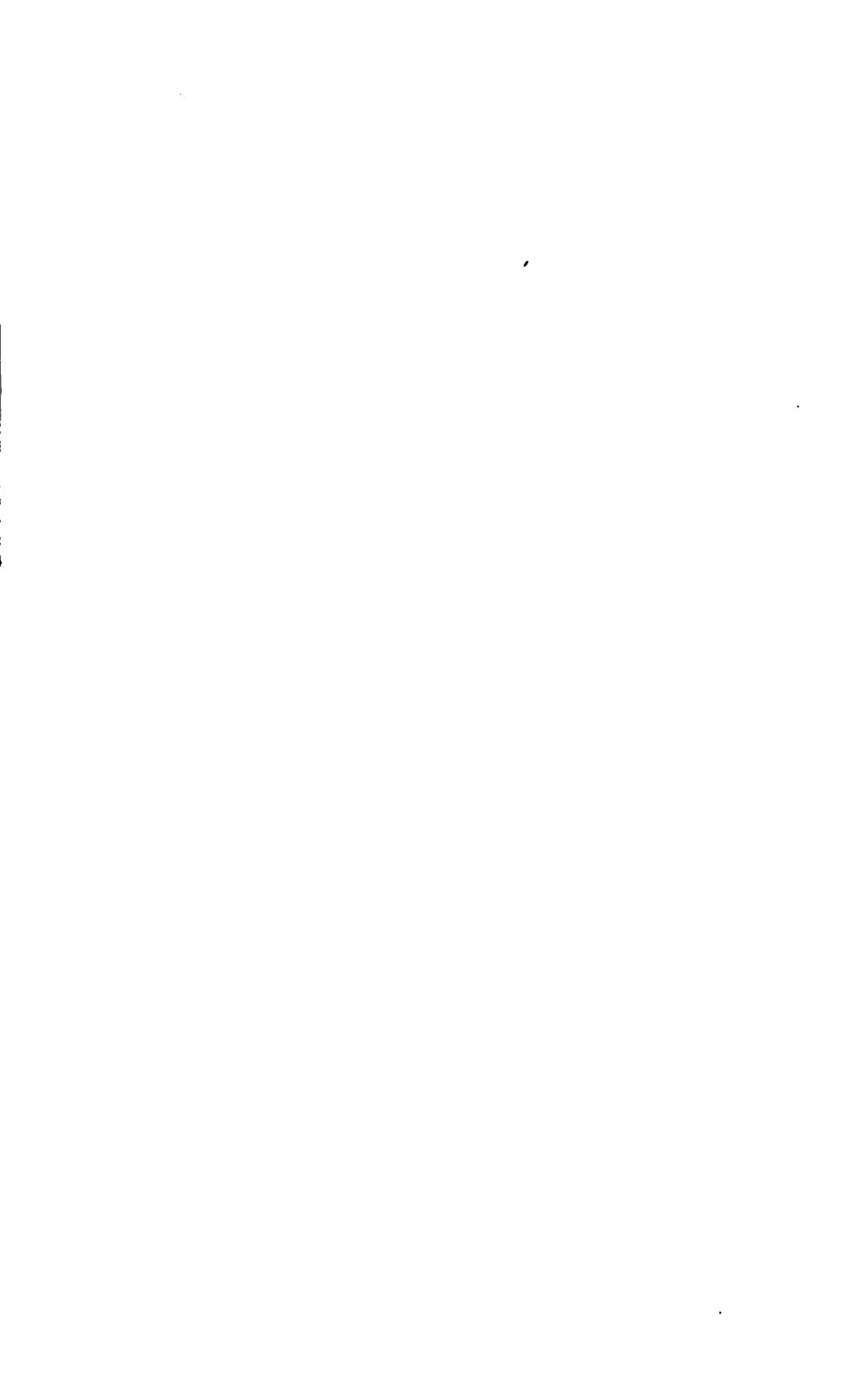




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THE
COURT AND REIGN
OF
FRANCIS THE FIRST
KING OF FRANCE







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EMBARKATION OF KING HENRY VIII AT DOVER, 31 MAY, 1520

OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

THE
COURT AND REIGN
OF
FRANCIS THE FIRST
King of France

BY
JULIA PARDOE
AUTHOR OF 'LOUIS XIV.' 'THE CITY OF THE SULTAN,' ETC.



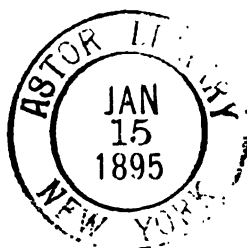
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THE COURT AND REIGN OF FRANCIS THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

1522

Lautrec returns to France—The temporary command of the army in the Milanese is confided to Lescun—Its insubordination—Despair of the Milanese citizens—Prosper Colonna strengthens the imperialist army—Lautrec demands supplies—Exhausted state of the treasury—The enamelled ornaments—Louise de Savoie undertakes to raise the supplies—The finance-minister—Lautrec returns to Milan—The supplies are withheld—The Pope declares war against France—The confederated army threaten Parma—Imprudence of Lautrec—Disgust of his troops—The Swiss desert—The French retire to Milan, are attacked by the enemy, and driven out—Lautrec retreats to Como, is pursued by Pescara, and takes up his winter quarters at Cremona—Lescun proceeds to France with despatches—Indignation of Francis—Anxiety of Leo X.—His exultation at the capture of Milan—His death.

UNFORTUNATELY for Francis matters wore a less favourable aspect in Lombardy, where Lautrec, who had returned to France in order to negotiate an advantageous and wealthy marriage with the daughter of the Comte Albret d'Orval, at the instigation of Madame de Châteaubriand, had confided to his brother, M. de Lescun, the temporary command of the army, which, from its having been left unpaid throughout the whole of the preceding year, had been

compelled to exist by plunder and rapine, and had, accordingly, created a revolt among the peasantry, who were driven to exasperation, not only by the daily and hourly exactions of the invading troops, but also from the fact that a great portion of the native nobility had emigrated in order to save the remnant of their property, and to escape from the tyrannous persecution of the French general; while Prosper Colonna, the general appointed both by the emperor and the pope, had profited by the discontent in the French ranks to invite to his standard the formidable Spanish bands who arrived from Naples, and to incorporate them with the German men-at-arms sent to his assistance by Charles and the Grisons and Swiss in the pay of the Holy See.

Under these circumstances Lautrec had awaited with impatience the return of Francis to his own dominions, in order to impress upon him the utter impracticability of pursuing the war and defending the Milanese with any chance of success unless he could carry back with him the sum of four hundred thousand crowns, with which to settle all arrears among his own troops, and to maintain a force of eight thousand Swiss whom his brother had hastily recruited.

Francis, angered as he was by this first and heavy check upon his desire to plunge once more into pleasure and dissipation, was, nevertheless, unable to deny the justice of such a claim; but although the war had only recently commenced, the treasury was as usual already exhausted, the return of the king

having been the signal for a succession of courtly festivities, hunting-parties, and lavish expenditure of every description. The favour of Madame de Châteaubriand had, moreover, become increased by their temporary separation; and it was the pleasure of Francis, who loved magnificence in every shape, to overwhelm her with the most precious jewels he could obtain, and of which the costliness was enhanced by the marvellous fashion of their setting, which had inspired such emulation among the Court jewellers that every ornament became a work of art, rendered even more gratifying to the vanity of the favourite by the fact that the chasing, enamelled with small gems, was formed on each into some gallant device, or intertwining of the FF. which preceded alike the Christian name of the king and her own; and that these were invented at the desire of the enamoured monarch by the Duchesse d'Alençon, his sister, who, rejoiced that her husband had not, during the late brief campaign, utterly sunk into an insignificance which would have increased the contempt that she already entertained for him, willingly lent herself to the wishes of her brother by evincing both affection and deference towards his fair and frail favourite.

Tastes of so ruinous a description as these had necessarily diminished the resources of the royal coffer; and, indisposed as he was to forego them, Francis nevertheless found himself equally powerless to refute the arguments of Lautrec and to supply his necessities.

Madame d'Angoulême, however, who was fertile in expedients, did not hesitate to promise that she would devise means to liberate him from this new difficulty, and he gladly left an affair in her hands which distracted his mind from other and more pleasant pursuits.

Thus authorized to act as she saw fit, the duchess at once summoned M. de Semblançay, the finance-minister, to her presence ; and after assuring him in her most insinuating manner that she felt convinced so good and zealous a servant of her son would leave no means untried to save him from the affront of being once more driven from the Milanese, she urged him to consider seriously if he could not suggest a method of averting such a calamity. For a time the old statesman only shook his head despondingly, and recapitulated the numerous sources of expense by which he was already surrounded, but Madame d'Angoulême was not to be so silenced.

"We are not met, my good friend," she said with a playful smile, "to enumerate our difficulties, but to discover an expedient which may preserve us from a great danger. We must have money, and surely in so terrible an emergency as this you cannot wish your sovereign to suppose that such a realm as France is utterly bankrupt! We must have many resources."

"We *had*, madame."

"Look at the wars which were sustained by former kings, when the nation was less flourishing than

in the present day ; and yet they were nobly and royally sustained."

"But those kings to whom you allude, madame, did not resemble Francis I."

"No, sir," replied the duchess with well-acted exultation, and wilfully overlooking the real drift of the minister's remark. "The greater the dishonour to France, therefore, should she suffer such a sovereign to be crippled by want of funds."

"The annual outlay of the Court is enormous, madame," persisted M. de Semblançay, in his turn evading a direct reply,—“more, far more in amount than would sustain a war."

"You refuse, then, to serve me, sir? You, on whose loyalty and attachment I have hitherto relied with such blind confidence!"

"By no means, madame, but I dare not give a pledge which I may find myself unable to redeem. How am I to raise this money?"

"I think that even I could suggest a method," said the pertinacious duchess, as she laid her small hand lightly upon the arm of her companion, and looked up into his face with an expression of almost affectionate trustfulness.

"Madame," said the old man, moved by this condescension, "you know that I have already loyally served three sovereigns. Judge, therefore, if I am likely to fail in my duty to a fourth. Be gracious enough to explain your meaning, and trust to my poor efforts if they can avail."

"I do, M. de Semblançay—I do," replied the

duchess energetically ; "we cannot at this moment look for further help from our good city of Paris?"

"The citizens already murmur, madame."

"And yet the king is so indulgent," said Madame d'Angoulême half reproachfully ; "when had the *bourgeoisie* such easy access to the Court? But it is ever so ; the people love pleasure, but do not care to pay its price. Let us not, however, waste time, which is now precious, upon their idle discontent. We were speaking of our alternative. Well, then, we will ask nothing of Paris ; that is agreed. Nay more, we will ask nothing near home. But what say you to the southern provinces, M. de Semblançay? Surely we have a right to look for succour from the south?"

"The measure will be difficult."

"Perhaps so, but not impossible. I have put the card into your hand. You have now only to play out the game."

Although only half convinced, the minister was disarmed ; and the duchess obtained his promise to levy four hundred thousand crowns upon the provincial chests of the south. This point gained, she hastened to inform her son of her success, who, in his turn, confided it to Lautrec, the anxiety of the *maréchal* having been greatly increased by a letter from his brother calling upon him to return with all speed to Milan, and to resume a government which he was himself utterly unable longer to sustain.

The advice of Madame de Châteaubriand, however, determined him against a haste which might tend to

frustrate all his plans, for she had no sooner explained to him the extent of the jealousy which her influence had excited in the heart of the duchess-mother than he became convinced that Louise de Savoie, extreme in all her feelings, would not hesitate to sacrifice, not only the favourite herself, but all who were connected with her, should she secure an opportunity of revenge; and accordingly he respectfully intimated to the king that, despite the urgency of the letter from Milan, he could not leave the Court until the money had been confided to him.

But Madame d'Angoulême, who was anxious to be rid of his importunity for reasons of her own, had resolved otherwise; and she represented to her son at once the impossibility of procuring so large a sum without some delay, and the danger which the obstinate resistance of Lautrec might bring upon his government; offering to pledge both her own word and that of the finance-minister that immediately the money had reached Paris it should be despatched to its destination without loss of time. With this arrangement Lautrec was, therefore, compelled to appear satisfied, supported as it was by the king's command that he should risk no further delay; and accordingly, having taken a brief leave of the sovereign and his Court, he returned to the unfortunate duchy which had suffered so bitterly from his arrogance and cruelty, with the confident expectation of being ere long enabled to silence the murmurings of his army and to establish his position.

As, however, after his arrival at Milan he received

no intelligence of the advent of the funds which were to liberate him from his difficulties, he immediately levied new contributions upon the most wealthy inhabitants of the desolated duchy, and punished those who resisted with the most uncompromising barbarity; the scaffold was his argument, and the confiscation of private property his vengeance. The dungeons had already been peopled by his equally inexorable brother, and one of his first victims was the Signor Cristoforo Pallavicini, whose only crime was the extent of his property, and whom he condemned to lose his head; a sentence which he carried into effect, although the judge before whom his cause was tried, in order if possible to give a semblance of justice to the proceeding, refused to append his signature to so unholy a sacrifice. Pallavicini, the scion of a noble house, was destined to expiate the sin of possessing an income of twenty-five thousand crowns, and he perished accordingly, in order that the work of war might be carried on, threatened as it was with immediate cessation from the failure of the receipts anticipated by the French marshal.

Day after day passed by, and yet the promised supplies were withheld, but Lautrec had become desperate; he remembered the formidable enemy whom he had left at Court—an enemy, moreover, who could at all hours command the ear and influence the resolutions of the monarch. He felt that not only his own interests but those of his whole family were at stake, and he resolved to persevere. He was deficient neither in talent nor decision, but

he was occasionally wanting in energy and presence of mind ; and while he possessed the art of enforcing obedience both from his troops and the people whom he governed, he nevertheless occasionally failed to profit by the most brilliant opportunities of signaling himself by an excess of precaution which irritated those who served under his command. Unpaid and dissatisfied, the Swiss mercenaries whom his brother had recruited deserted by whole companies at a time, and left a void in his ranks which he was unable to supply ; while, on the contrary, those who had joined the banner of Leo X. remained faithful to his cause, although repeatedly recalled by the Helvetic diet.

The confederated party threatened to besiege Parma, and the situation of the marshal was critical. The Pope had, on the 1st of August, declared war against France, and his troops had even marched upon that city ; but a quarrel for precedence which arose between Prosper Colonna and Ferdinand d'Avalos, Marquis de Pescara (who, as imperial general, claimed to share the command upon equal terms with the generalissimo of the Pope), occasioned so much confusion that Lautrec found himself enabled, during the delay occasioned by this misunderstanding, to adopt such efficient measures for the defence of the threatened fortress as sufficed to check the progress of the enemy, who, after having possessed themselves of a portion of the city at the commencement of September, were compelled to relinquish their capture by the arrival of the *maréchal* in person, accompanied by several officers of rank

and a reinforcement of troops, which, although not sufficiently powerful to encounter their opponents at a disadvantage, still contributed to paralyse their movements. An entire month was then lost by the opposing generals, each anticipating succours which might enable him to overcome his antagonist. These, however, failed equally on either side, and at length, although not without discussion and dissension among the confederate leaders, the siege was raised.

Upon this occasion M. de Lautrec was guilty of one of those acts of hyper-caution to which we have already alluded. His troops, flushed by their advantage, would gladly have pursued it ; but the *maréchal*, alarmed by the partial revolt in the Milanese, and the aversion with which he was personally regarded throughout the country, was unwilling to risk such an attempt as a pursuit of the retiring and disheartened besiegers ; and he consequently permitted Prosper Colonna to pass the Po unimpeded, and to secure a position which enabled him to command the help of which he might by an effort have been deprived, and thus to carry war into the heart of Cremona. Nevertheless his first error might not have proved fatal had he not followed it up by refusing, despite the remonstrances of those about him, to attack the imperialist general who occupied a disadvantageous position at Rebecco, upon the banks of the Aglio, and under the very guns of the Venetian fortress of Pontevico, by which his own demonstration would have been effectively seconded.

This double opportunity wilfully disregarded disgusted his troops, who henceforward lost faith in their leader; and the influence of the Cardinal of Sion operated so powerfully upon the Swiss mercenaries, who had hitherto remained faithful to his cause, that they once more deserted in such numbers as to leave barely a force of four thousand in the ranks of France. Those who remained, moreover, murmured loudly, and demanded the recompense which was habitually conceded to them after every engagement; declaring that if they had not been placed in contact with the enemy under circumstances which rendered success inevitable, the fault lay with the *maréchal*, who had not afforded them an opportunity of conquest, and not with themselves, who were willing and even eager to be led to battle.

Lautrec was destined most bitterly to expiate his fault. The supplies of money were still withheld. He was distrusted by his troops, detested by the citizens, alike feared and execrated by the people; he had lost the *prestige* which his former military renown had cast about him, and even those who shared his command murmured loudly at an enforced inaction which perilled their own honour. He had no longer, however, an alternative; his army was enfeebled by desertion, and his position rendered precarious by private animosity. The sun of his glory had set, and, no longer able to threaten, he found himself compelled to act only on the defensive, and even to retreat within the walls of Milan; a shelter which he had scarcely gained ere he was in

his turn assailed by the confederated generals, who made so vigorous a night attack that, aided by the citizens, they took possession of the town; and the discomfited *maréchal*, who was awakened from his sleep by the tumult, had scarcely time to retreat to Como, leaving a portion of his troops to garrison the citadel.

Even there, however, he was not destined to remain in safety, but being pursued by the Marquis de Pescara, was compelled to enter the Venetian territory, where, at the end of a few days, his mortification reached its climax by the information which was conveyed to him that not only had Como surrendered to the imperialists, but that the city of Cremona was also in their power, although the citadel still held out. Enraged at the overthrow of all his brilliant anticipations, Lautrec no sooner learnt these ill tidings than he made a last and desperate effort, introduced some troops into the town, and by a vigorous attack upon the walls succeeded in wresting it once more from the enemy, and in establishing his winter quarters in the only portion of his late government which now acknowledged his authority, or afforded a safe asylum for his person.

In this emergency the *maréchal* despatched his brother Lescun to the French Court with despatches, which, being of so disastrous an import, could not have arrived at a more unpropitious moment. A second conference had taken place at Calais between the ministers of Charles and Francis, at which Wolsey presided as the representative of his sovereign,

with a state and dignity even hyper-monarchical. Presents of the most costly description had once more been lavished upon the avaricious cardinal, and no pains spared to conciliate his favour ; but the whole of the proceedings had been carried on with a levity and carelessness which convinced the French statesmen that no good result could be anticipated upon their part. The terms proposed by Wolsey were such as their dignity did not permit them to accept ; and Francis had now gained a perfect conviction of the perfidy and double-dealing of the English monarch and his minister.

He was consequently ill prepared to receive the tidings from Milan with either patience or temper ; and he accordingly overwhelmed the unfortunate messenger with the most bitter reproaches ; accusing his brother of being deficient both in skill and courage ; of having so misconducted his government as to render the name of his sovereign odious to the Milanese ; and of ultimately completing by cowardice what he had commenced by cruelty.

Lescun shrank abashed before a storm of accusation which he was not permitted to palliate. He was aware that one of its brightest jewels had been rent from the crown of Francis ; and with consummate judgment he bowed before this tempest of royal wrath, and left it to time and to Madame de Châteaubriand to justify both himself and the absent maréchal.

While these disastrous events were taking place in the Milanese, Leo X. was a prey to the most

violent anxiety. The reverses of Charles in the Low Countries he had never anticipated ; and his apprehension that the arms of Francis, towards whom he had falsified all his pledges, and whose friendship he could never again hope to regain, would prove equally fortunate in Italy, filled him with constant forebodings. His exultation on learning the capture of Milan and the recovery of Parma and Piacenza was consequently extravagant ; and he immediately declared his intention of commanding public thanksgivings to be offered up in every church in Rome in gratitude for such unhopèd-for success. The surprise, had, however, affected his health, and having given the necessary directions he retired to his chamber complaining of slight indisposition. In the first instance this illness excited little uneasiness, being attributed by some to excessive emotion, and by others to the effects of cold or malaria ; but it was, nevertheless, fated to be his last, and on Sunday the 1st of December he expired so suddenly as to deprive him of the habitual ceremonies of the Church, after the brief suffering of a week. Suspicions of poison, well or ill founded, were rife in Rome ; and it is asserted not only that the appearance of the body after death tended to justify them, but that a *post-mortem* examination removed all doubt.

CHAPTER II

1522

Discontent of the Duc de Bourbon—A summons to Amboise—A mature passion—Louise de Savoie offers her hand to Bourbon—He rejects it—A mutual hatred—Marguerite de Valois and Bonnivet—The palace of a parvenu—Ostentation of the Duc de Bourbon—The lawsuit—Accession of Adrian VI.—Francis resolves to attempt the recovery of the Milanese—He levies a tax on the States of Languedoc—Charles V. visits England—The two sovereigns agree to invade France—Francis sends reinforcements to the army of Lautrec—The French take Novara, but are repulsed before Pavia—Prosper Colonna establishes himself at Bicocca—The Swiss under Lautrec mutiny, and insist upon meeting the enemy—Lautrec marches on Bicocca—Disorderly charge of the Swiss mercenaries—They desert—Lautrec retreats to Cremona, and proceeds to France—Lescun assumes the command, is attacked by Colonna, and compelled to capitulate—The Venetian Senate decline to enter into a treaty with France—Lescun evacuates Lombardy—Pescara marches against Genoa—The city is taken by treachery—Cruelty of the imperialist generals—The French lose Italy.

MEANWHILE the Duc de Bourbon, who had become a widower, and who could not forget the affront to which he had been subjected by the king at Valenciennes, instead of joining the Court at Amboise had established himself at his hotel in Paris, where he lived in almost complete seclusion, receiving only a few of his most intimate friends and followers, apparently absorbed by some dark and engrossing thought, and occupied in taking measures to protect himself against the pretensions of Madame d'Angoulême, who, on the pretext of being herself a Bourbon,

had instituted a claim to inherit from his late wife the large property which he had received as her dowry.

Unaware of the secret motive by which Louise de Savoie was thus urged to an attempt which would, if successful, reduce him from one of the most wealthy to one of the most needy nobles of the Court, Bourbon saw only in the obstinate rigour with which she prosecuted her suit the open demonstration of an implacable enmity; and the iron which before had already entered his heart corroded there.

Thus it was with more surprise than alacrity that he obeyed her summons to Amboise, although it reached him in an autograph letter couched in the most courteous terms; nor was he less astonished when he found himself welcomed with the same warmth and urbanity.

Madame d'Angoulême, although she had now attained her forty-seventh year, was still a superb woman, and her mirror only reflected the flatteries of the courtiers. Her gallantries were as unrestrained and as numerous as ever, and she did not care to remember that time was passing rapidly over her which she could never redeem. We have already hinted at her passion for the connétable, and that passion, although it had been suffered to slumber for a time, had never been suppressed. The very litigation into which she had entered had been undertaken rather as a means than as a result; and, satisfied that she had now awakened the fears of the

duke, she simply sought to complete her work by awakening alike his ambition and his softer feelings. Nothing had been omitted to strengthen the spell. Her attire on his reception was both graceful and gorgeous, her manner at once dignified and gentle, her arguments at the same time reproachful and reluctant; but still Bourbon stood his ground and maintained his rights.

"You are obdurate, duke," she said at length, with a smile which was half smothered in a sigh; "you do not, or you will not, understand me. At a former period, and under the same circumstances, this very question which we are now discussing was argued between yourself and Madame Anne de France, and finally arranged in a manner which we should perhaps in our turn do well to imitate."

"Would that it were possible, madame!" replied Bourbon gloomily; "but M. d'Alençon has been fated to thwart me in my path through life. He has lately robbed me of my honour—and—he married Madame Marguerite."

"True," said the duchess, biting her lip; "the king's sister is beyond your reach—but the king's mother, M. de Bourbon, is a widow."

"Do I understand you rightly, madame?" asked the duke, as a cloud gathered upon his brow. "Do not jest with me. Recent events have rendered me a poor courtier."

"I am sincere, connétable," said Louise de Savoie energetically; "I am ready to make our separate interests one and indivisible."

"I thank you, madame," was the cold rejoinder. "You have conferred upon me an honour which I could not anticipate, and by which I regret that I cannot profit. I shall never contract a second marriage, and if this be the alternative of your forbearance I must brave the worst. If our lawsuit is to proceed, so be it; I am prepared to uphold my claim."

"As you will, Monsieur de Bourbon," said the duchess, rising haughtily from her seat; "our interview is at an end, and henceforth we are strangers to each other."

The connétable attempted no rejoinder, but with a ceremonious salutation he quitted the apartment, and left the haughty Louise de Savoie to her reflections.

It was the first occasion upon which, during a long career of vice, she had been made to feel that she was scorned, and for a time she was half suffocated by conflicting emotions. In so far as her corrupted heart was capable of such a feeling, she had loved Bourbon; she, the mother of a king, with one foot upon the steps of the throne,—she had loved a subject, and had been repulsed! But Louise de Savoie could hate as vehemently as she had loved.

Nor was Bourbon less decided in his aversion to Madame d'Angoulême than he had by this interview rendered her towards himself. It was to her interference that he attributed the marriage of her daughter to the Duc d'Alençon at a period when he could no longer entertain a doubt that had the

princess been permitted to follow her own inclination she would have become his wife ; and subsequently, his disgust was deepened by her undisguised protection of Bonnivet, whose passion for Marguerite was well known ; a disgust which was heightened by the fact that the admiral was accused, during a visit made by the Court to his château in Poitou, of having adopted such measures to possess himself, if not of the affections, at least of the person of the princess, as must have cost him his head, favourite as he was, had not the principal attendant of Madame d'Alençon ventured to remind her imprudent mistress (who in the first burst of her indignation was about to communicate the whole transaction to the king) that affairs of so delicate a nature would not bear handling, and that there were evil tongues about the Court which would not hesitate to imply that M. de Bonnivet must have received more than ordinary encouragement before he could have dared so much.

Nevertheless the trustworthiness of the same lady may well be suspected, as a whispered version of the disgraceful tale soon spread among the courtiers, and at length reached the ears of the connétable, whose indignation was unbounded, and who, with the haughtiness which was inherent in him, considered himself doubly aggrieved that such an outrage should remain unpunished when the aggressor was a vassal of his own, who did homage to him for his estates, and moreover a man of comparatively humble birth. So great indeed was his contempt for the sudden rise of Bonnivet, whom he saw daily increasing in

arrogance, and affecting a magnificence with which he could not himself compete, that as he was pacing the marble hall of the favourite beside the king, who was warmly expatiating upon the taste and splendour of the whole edifice, he continued resolutely silent, until Francis, struck by the circumstance, turned towards him suddenly with the exclamation, "You amaze me, M. le Connétable! You who delight in all that is rich and great—you have not bestowed even one word of praise upon this splendid pile. And yet, you cannot deny that it is a noble residence. Be candid; what think you of it?"

"That the cage is too large for the bird," was the dogged reply, as the duke paused in front of a window overlooking his own château of Châtellerault, which appeared like a mere villa from the spot on which he stood.

The king made no comment upon the abruptness of his companion, nor did he affect to comprehend the movement by which it was accompanied, although he was probably reminded at that instant of the feeling which he had himself experienced when, in the year 1517, he had stood sponsor to the infant son of the duke, who received him and his Court at Moulins with a magnificence that was almost regal. On that occasion both the ceremony and the banquet by which it was succeeded were gorgeous in the extreme; and several days were consumed in tourneys, masquerades, balls, and other pastimes, during the whole of which time the guests were waited on by five hundred gentlemen of good family, attired in

rich suits of velvet, and each wearing about his neck a triple chain of gold ; a decoration which at that period was not only esteemed as one of excessive magnificence, but also implied the rank of the entertainer.

Although he saw fit to display so much splendour at the christening of his son, M. de Bourbon had, from the hour of his birth, felt convinced that the infant would not survive ; his mother, Suzanne de Bourbon, being not only infirm in health but also slightly deformed in person ; and his foreboding proved correct, for not only did the child die within a few months, but it was followed by the mother at the commencement of the following year.

We have already stated, early in the work, that it was to avoid a weary and uncertain lawsuit that the connétable had been induced to accept the hand of his cousin, while his heart was wholly given to the Princesse Marguerite ; and, accordingly, he had by his marriage with Suzanne united all the possessions of the several branches of the Bourbon family, which rendered him at once the most wealthy and the most powerful noble in France. The death of his wife was succeeded in the following year by that of her mother, Madame Anne de France ; and thus the duke found himself, as he believed, the sole legitimate claimant to enormous possessions, and became anxious for an heir to his proud name and ample fortunes. The Duchesse d'Alençon was lost to him, and after some lingering regrets he had so far overcome his repugnance to a second marriage

with another as to ask of Francis the hand of the Princesse Rénée, the sister of Queen Claude.

The king, however, who saw in this proposal only a new proof of the soaring ambition of his already too powerful subject, and Madame d'Angoulême, for still more personal reasons, were alike regardless both of the claims of Bourbon and of the entreaties of the princess, who, endowed with remarkable intellect and a sound judgment, was well able to appreciate the noble qualities of her suitor.

The interference of the duchess-mother was not, as we have seen, favourable to her own interests, but only served to add another to the long list of injuries which the duke attributed to her influence ; and thus, when she so far forgot the dignity of her station and the modesty of her sex as to offer to him her own hand, he revenged himself not only by rejecting the proposal, but by detailing the whole scene to his chosen friends, accompanying his recital by terms so offensive to the character of the duchess as to exasperate Francis, who, it is even said, upon one occasion raised his hand to strike him.

Under these circumstances Louise de Savoie vowed his ruin ; and unfortunately her authority over the chancellor had long been so unbounded that she urged forward the threatened lawsuit with an acrimony and perseverance which betrayed her perfect confidence in the result.

While this important cause was pending the college of cardinals was engrossed by the necessity of electing a new Pope ; and meanwhile the confede-

rated sovereigns, who had lost in Leo X. a powerful and sure ally, suspended their proceedings, uncertain as to what might be the views and principles of his successor. Among the numerous competitors for the vacant dignity it was, however, universally believed that the choice of the conclave would fall either on the Cardinal de' Medici, the nephew of the deceased pontiff, or Wolsey, the English minister. The one relied upon the efforts made by Leo X. to secure his election, and the other upon the often repeated pledges of the emperor. Both were, nevertheless, fated to disappointment ; and great was the astonishment, not only of the two candidates themselves, when, despite all the intrigues of their several parties, they found themselves unsuccessful, but also that of all Christendom, when it was ascertained that a man whose very name had hitherto been almost unheard in Rome, and who had apparently made no effort to attain the triple crown, was called to the chair of St. Peter. The influence of the Medici and the crooked policy of Wolsey, who had not scrupled to sacrifice the honour of his monarch and the interests of his country to his own wild dream of ambition, had succumbed beneath the superior craft of the wily Charles, and on the 9th of January 1522, Adrian, Cardinal of Tortosa, the former preceptor of the emperor, and his present governor in Spain, was elected by an overwhelming majority.

Francis did not for a moment deceive himself as to the probable results of this new triumph on the part of his enemy ; for not only had Charles by in-

fluencing the conclave to elect one of his own devoted servants to the papal see, given himself an immediate and powerful interest in Italy, but it had also convinced all who were attached to his cause that he was both able and willing to promote their fortunes. This new mortification rankled deeply with the French king, and it served to arouse him for a time from his trance of pleasure and to decide him to make another and a strenuous effort to reinstate himself in the Milanese. The power of Charles had become formidable to all Europe. The whole of Germany acknowledged him as its emperor; every European sovereign was either his ally or his dependant; his sway was now colossal; and Francis saw himself called upon to contend single-handed against a hydra-headed enemy. Of the growing hostility of England, moreover, he had long ceased to entertain a doubt, and he accordingly anticipated from day to day a declaration of war, which had been hitherto delayed rather from policy than from inclination.

Nor were his home prospects more cheering. His frontiers were for the most part unfortified and his treasury empty; his subjects already overwhelmed with taxation, and the citizens of Paris full of discontent. Even the very courtiers about him, although they were not insensible to pleasure, were still greedy of glory; and many a noble brow darkened as the shadow of coming events loomed over their country. In this emergency his first measures were to levy a tax of twenty-five thousand livres on the states of

Languedoc, for the purpose of repairing the fortifications of Narbonne and the fortresses of the eastern Pyrenees ; to renew the sale of judicial offices ; and finally, to institute perpetual rents on the Hotel-de-Ville. These arrangements were not made, however, without considerable opposition. Strong in his sense of the royal prerogative, Francis disdained to explain to his subjects in the more distant provinces the fearful emergency in which he was involved ; and thus, what through personal alarm or national pride might have been conceded to him without serious difficulty, was withheld from a resolution to resist the mere dictates of an arbitrary will.

While the French king was engaged in these financial operations the emperor paid a second visit to England, and remained the guest of Henry VIII. during six weeks, where he employed his time so successfully as to induce his royal host to ratify in person the betrothal secretly concluded at Bruges by the cardinal-legate between himself and the Princess Mary, who was to receive a dowry of four hundred thousand crowns ; and to obtain his pledge that he would enter France simultaneously with himself before the end of May 1524, accompanied by an army of forty thousand infantry and ten thousand horse ; each declaring the several provinces over which he affected to have a claim, and receiving the promise of the other that he should be permitted to retain them in the event of their subjugation.

The treasury of France was no sooner replenished than Francis lost no time in providing for the restor-

ation of the Milanese, and despatched for that purpose a supply of money to the Maréchal de Lautrec by the Bastard of Savoie, M. de Chabannes, and the Comte de Montmorenci, to whom he moreover gave authority to levy a force of sixteen thousand Swiss. The effect of this reinforcement was electrical; the flagging spirit of the French troops revived, and Lautrec, eager to revenge his late defeat, displayed an energy which, had it been more seasonably developed, might have saved the duchy. Several of the minor towns were retaken, and, flushed with hope, the maréchal pushed forward to Milan, where he was gallantly opposed by the garrison, but nevertheless commenced an attack upon the city, to whose capture, however, the hatred with which he had inspired the inhabitants proved an equally formidable obstacle.

Weary of his iron rule, they defended themselves with an energy that baffled all his efforts; and at length, convinced that his attempt to reduce Milan was hopeless, he was reluctantly compelled to abandon it, and to march upon Novara, which having yielded enabled him to form a junction with some troops which his brother had brought to his assistance, and among whom were Pietro da Navarro—who had for a time abandoned the cause of France, but whose sword was once more unsheathed in her defence—and the redoubtable Bayard. He then made an attack upon Pavia; but Prosper Colonna had not only succeeded in reaching that city before him, but had also enabled Francisco Sforza to join him with his troops—an event which prevented its capture.

Having relieved Pavia, Colonna took up his quarters at Bicocca, a castle seated in an extensive park, and surrounded by deep ditches, about a league from Milan, where he hastily threw up outworks, and rendered the place so strong as to deter Lautrec from any attempt to dislodge him. The situation of the *maréchal* was embarrassing; for not only did Colonna hold him at bay in this stronghold, but Anchiso Visconti with a body of Milanese troops blockaded Arona, where a portion of the money which had arrived for the pay of the army was thus rendered unattainable. The French cavalry were already eighteen months in arrear, but they nevertheless bore their privations with patience, although they were badly equipped and still worse armed; while the Venetians, who, in accordance with the recent treaty, had joined the French forces for the defence of the Milanese, were supine and cowardly, and resolutely refused either to advance far from their own frontiers or to risk their safety in any engagement by which they could not individually profit. Finally, the Swiss, wearied by a war which afforded them no opportunity of pillage, and of a general who preferred strategy to action, murmured loudly when they found that the attack upon Bicocca was relinquished; and they had no sooner ascertained that the long-expected supplies had reached Arona than they collected tumultuously about the tent of the *maréchal*, declaring that he should immediately satisfy their demands or give battle to Colonna.

In vain did the French general explain to them the impossibility of procuring the money during the blockade of the town where it was deposited, and the impregnable nature of the papal general's position ; they were deaf to his reasonings, and persisted that they would be paid, brought hand to hand with the enemy, or disband themselves.

The alternative was difficult, as the departure of the mercenaries would have been equivalent to a defeat, and Lautrec was painfully convinced that it would be immediately followed by that of the Venetians, already weary of the service in which they were engaged. In this emergency he consulted the feelings of his troops, who were all eager for action ; and although against his own judgment and that of M. de Savoie and the Marquis de la Palice, he ultimately left Monza on the 29th of April (1523) at daybreak, having committed the charge of the vanguard to Montmorency, that of the rear to the Duke of Urbino, and reserved to himself the command of the main body. He had consented that the Swiss should, as they had demanded, attack the enemy in front ; while his brother, the Maréchal de Foix, should march to the left upon the bridge, and effect an entrance into the enclosure ; a third division, whom he caused to substitute the red cross for the national one of white, in the hope that they might be mistaken by Colonna for a body of his own troops, were ordered to the right ; while the Black Bands and the Venetians were to support the Swiss and to act as a reserve.

In order to secure the success of this combined attack, however, it was necessary that the three divisions should arrive on the ground simultaneously, and that the Swiss, who were in advance, should move slowly, in order to give time to the other bodies to come up with them—a circumstance which was strenuously explained by the anxious general, who was aware that the fortunes of the day hinged mainly upon this manœuvre. His eloquence, however, availed nothing. Arrogant and headstrong, the mercenaries affected to despise the enemy against whom they were about to contend, and complained that too much time had already been lost in futile calculations; and, accordingly, Montmorency had no sooner halted in a defile under cover of the entrenchments, for the purpose of awaiting the arrival of the artillery, than they openly opposed his authority, and, asserting that they did not require the assistance of the French guns, rushed tumultuously forward, exposing themselves to the fire of the enemy, which swept them off in files as they advanced, without themselves losing a single man, protected as they were by entrenchments so loftily constructed that the Swiss could scarcely attain the summit with their pikes.

It was a butchery rather than a conflict. Three thousand of them fell before they would retreat, and among others their celebrated leader, Albert de la Pierre; while Montmorency was so desperately wounded that he was carried from the field. At the precise moment when they at length gave way

Lautrec had reached the right wing of Colonna's army ; but the papal general, fearing some stratagem on the part of his adversary, had negatived the *ruse* of the *maréchal* by causing his men to add a green bough to the red cross on their uniform, and the imperialist troops consequently fell upon the French, whom they at once recognised, without fear of mistake. As the engagement commenced M. de Lescun passed the bridge, but it was already too late. Colonna, relieved from the attack of the Swiss, who were totally routed, had full leisure to turn his whole strength against the two marshals, and to compel their retreat.

The position attained by the *Maréchal de Foix*, who had succeeded in forcing an entrance to the enemy's entrenchments, had inspired him for a time with the hope that he might be enabled to hold his ground, and to redeem the imprudence of the vanguard ; but unfortunately for the French cause he had also under his command a number of Swiss troops, who, instead of supporting the gallant charge made by his cavalry, resolutely refused to act ; and thus his whole brigade was cut to pieces, while he himself had a narrow escape, his horse having been killed under him, and a second with difficulty secured to carry him from the field. This circumstance at once became evident to Colonna, who attempted to profit by it on the instant, and for that purpose ordered a sally to be made, by which the supine mercenaries might be taken in flank ; but the manœuvre, rapidly as it was executed, was rendered abortive by M. de

Pontdormy,¹ who, suspecting the object of their movement, attacked the advancing party with his cavalry so resolutely that before they could accomplish their retreat the greater portion of them were destroyed.

Baffled, but not beaten, the French forces were still formidable; and Lautrec, whose energy continued unabated, determined to renew the attack on the following day; but aware of the great importance of retaining the Swiss troops, he exerted all his eloquence to induce them to remain within sight of Bicocca, and even pledged himself that his own men should sustain the brunt of the battle, if they would promise to support them.

Conscious, however, that they had by their own imprudence trammelled his proceedings, they maintained a sullen silence; refused to communicate their intentions; and assumed the position of persons who considered themselves aggrieved. Had they possessed sufficient temper to be influenced by the arguments of the *maréchal*, and remained true to their engagements, all might still have been retrieved, and their own sullied glory restored; but the representations of the Cardinal of Sion, who from the opposite camp had never ceased his efforts to estrange them from the cause of France, combined with their

¹ Antoine de Crequi was the son of Jean de Crequi, the sixth of the name, Seigneur de Crequi and Canaples. The original name of the family was Pont-de-Remy, which had ultimately been corrupted into Pontdormy. M. de Pontdormy was a brave general, and highly esteemed, not only by his sovereign, but by all the army, who placed the greatest faith in his intrepidity and judgment.

mortification, rendered them invulnerable to persuasion ; and on the morrow they not only commenced their retreat, but even effected it in so tumultuous and disorderly a manner that Lautrec saw himself compelled to detach the whole of his cavalry to cover their rear in order to preserve them from total annihilation ; and thus sheltered they made their way to Bergama, and thence returned to their mountains.

Nor was this the only serious defection with which the French general had to contend, for his prescience as regarded the Venetians had not deceived him. Their inertness and disaffection became so evident after the departure of the mercenaries that he found himself reduced to the necessity of sending M. de Montmorency at once to Venice in order to effect a better understanding with the only Italian state which still remained friendly to France, and to abandon all further idea of attacking Colonna in his stronghold. Once more, therefore, he strengthened the new fortresses which still maintained their allegiance to Francis ; and leaving the command of his exhausted and harassed army to his brother, the Maréchal de Foix, he started for Paris, to explain in person to the king the causes which had conduced to his defeat, and to secure more efficient aid both in money and troops.

Lautrec had not only lost a great number of men, but many of his bravest officers had fallen ; while his whole remaining force was dispirited, and ill able to contend against the formidable enemy to which it was opposed. Colonna profited by his knowledge

of these circumstances, and, abandoning his position at Bicocca, he at once marched upon Cremona, which he invested, aware that the Maréchal de Foix had retired there with the remnant of his army, accompanied by Giovanni de' Medici at the head of about sixteen hundred Italians, to whom one of the gates of the city was confided. This reinforcement had inspired the French general with new courage, and he made immediate preparations for defence, trusting still to redeem the disasters of the late engagement; but once more he was destined to prove the danger and inconvenience attendant upon the command of an army without either political or national sympathies. Could he have secured in lieu of this Florentine force an equal number of his own countrymen, there is no doubt that he might have held the important place which he then occupied; but, with true Italian guile, De' Medici no sooner saw Colonna before the walls than he made an application for the immediate payment of the arrears due to his followers, and even threatened to open the gate of which he had possession to the imperialist general if his claim were not cancelled upon the instant. Impoverished as he was, it was with extreme difficulty that M. de Lescun raised the sum demanded, and silenced the clamours of his *soi-disant* allies, with the help of his principal officers; but the ill-timed pertinacity of the Florentine at once convinced him that he must place no reliance upon the sincerity of his assistance; and under this impression he saw no other alternative than that of a capitulation with the

enemy, by which he bound himself to deliver up the city at the expiration of three months unless troops should in the interval arrive from France to reinforce him. Colonna accepted the offered terms, which, by relieving him from the necessity of employing his troops before Cremona, afforded him an opportunity of besieging Genoa.

The Venetian senate, moreover, no sooner ascertained this proof of weakness on the part of the French general than, although upon the point of acceding to the treaty proposed by Montmorency, they wavered, hesitated, and finally declined to sign it, under the conviction that no army could reach Italy in time to release the French marshal from his engagements; and thus, reduced to rely upon their own attenuated strength, and unable to make head against an overpowering enemy, the army of Francis successively lost Lodi and Pizzighettona, the first by siege and the latter by a capitulation; and finally Lescun saw himself, on the 21st of May, reduced to sign an agreement by which he was bound to evacuate the whole of Lombardy save the three fortresses of Cremona, Novara, and Milan if he did not receive succour within forty days; Andreo Gritti, the general of the Venetians, having meanwhile retired with all his troops to the frontier of his own country, and making no effort beyond that of defending the post of which he had possessed himself.

The whole of Italy was once more lost to France with the exception of the solitary province of Genoa, which had not been included in the capitulation of

the Maréchal de Foix ; and even that was soon to follow, the Marquis de Pescara having marched against it at the head of all the Spanish foot and a division of the Italian army, whose natural rapacity was heightened by his promise that the capture of the city would enable him to satisfy all their demands, and to enrich them with the spoils of the enemy against whom they were leagued. An immediate capture of the place was, however, prevented by the arrival of Pietro da Navarro with a couple of galleys and two hundred French infantry, although his influence was insufficient to prevent a parley between Pescara and the Genoese burgesses, who sent a deputation to the Spanish general to endeavour to effect favourable terms for themselves. During this conference it was clearly understood on both sides that all hostilities were to be suspended ; and the French soldiers gladly took advantage of the interval to relax for a time in that rigour of discipline which they had hitherto maintained. Fearless of treachery, the guard of the city was diminished and many of the sentinels were withdrawn from their posts,—a mistaken trust, which was fatally expiated ; for some of Pescara's skirmishers having detected a breach in the walls, communicated the discovery which they had been heedlessly permitted to make, and, profiting by this circumstance, effected an entrance into the city, whither they were immediately followed by a considerable force, and encountered only by Pietro da Navarro and his little band of followers, who were at once overpowered ; when,

despite the assistance rendered by the citizens, who treacherously welcomed the besiegers, Genoa the superb was pillaged with a cold-blooded ferocity disgraceful to its captors.

This event sealed the ruin of the French cause. The stipulated period for the release of Cremona had expired ; and although reinforcements were sent from France headed by the Duc de Longueville, they only arrived in time to learn that no further hope existed of any successful attempt, and consequently returned to Picardy, where their services might still prove available, accompanied by the cavalry of the unfortunate Lescun.

CHAPTER III

1522

Louise de Savoie urges on her lawsuit against Bourbon—The Parliament refuses to ratify the decision of the judges—The estates of Bourbon are placed under sequestration—Unguarded violence of the duke—the emperor despatches M. de Beaurain to Bourbon—the price of rebellion—Bourbon negotiates with Wolsey—A double treason—Improvidence of Francis—Excesses of the French soldiery—The plague in Paris—Mob riots—Ineffective precautions—Discontent of Adrian VI.—He endeavours to alienate the Venetian states from France—The Venetians enter into the European league—Lautrec arrives at Court—Irritation of Francis—The maréchal is refused an audience—Waning influence of Madame de Châteaubriand—Bourbon espouses the cause of Lautrec—A stormy interview—Lautrec pleads his cause boldly—The finance-minister and the regent—Louise de Savoie accused of appropriating the public monies—Truth and treachery—Reconciliation of the king and Lautrec—The two factions—Queen Claude urges the marriage of the Princesse Renée and Bourbon—The princess is dissuaded by the regent—The French succour Fontarabia—Death of the Marquis de Châtillon—Charles V. lands at Dover and meets Henry VIII.—Unjust demands of the English king—Dignified reply of Francis—Arrogant declaration of Bonnavet—Charles confers the protectorate of the Low Countries upon Henry VIII.—War declared against France by England—The Earl of Surrey and the Comte de Buren attack the French frontiers—the Duc de Vendôme proceeds to the seat of war—Francis coins the silver screen of St. Martin's tomb to pay his troops—Imprudence of Francis—The Earl of Surrey returns to England—Francis despatches an army to invest Milan—Francis is apprized of the intended rebellion of Bourbon—The queen's dinner—Bourbon leaves the Court—The Comte de St. Vallier—Pertinacity of Bourbon—He retires to Moulins.

DESPITE these reverses, involving as they did the honour of the French crown, and in themselves so disastrous as to have claimed the whole attention of Louise de Savoie, she had continued, with the assistance of Duprat, to pursue her suit against the Duc

de Bourbon with an acrimony which betrayed the whole extent of the hatred that she bore him. The possessions which had formed the dowry of his wife, and had been secured to her by the assent of her mother, Madame Anne de France, proceeded, as we have elsewhere stated, from a twofold source. A portion of them descended in the Bourbon family by inheritance; and Madame d'Angoulême, who was the niece of the two last dukes of the elder branch, became their legitimate heiress in the event of her being enabled to set aside the donation made by the Duchesse Suzanne to her husband; while the remainder were appanages which the Crown was competent to reclaim at pleasure, and to reincorporate in the royal domains.

It was upon the hereditary inheritance that Louise de Savoie founded her pretensions, assuming that Madame Suzanne de Bourbon had acted illegally in disposing of the family property during her own lifetime and without her sanction; while the advocate-general, anxious still further to second her views, to which he was no stranger, demanded that all the titles by which M. de Bourbon held his estates should be communicated to him, in order that he might be enabled to form his opinion upon the legitimacy of his several claims; declaring at the same time that he was strongly inclined to believe that the whole inheritance belonged by right of law to the monarch.

This judgment he speedily followed up by asserting that no valid claim could be advanced to such

portions of the domains of the duke as had been secured to the family of Bourbon during the reigns of Charles VII. and Louis XI., such concessions having been sanctioned rather by favour than by justice ; while those which had been granted by Louis XII. were still more questionable from the fact of their having encroached upon the rights of the Crown. Thus, and upon these arguments, he reclaimed the county of La Marche and the confiscated lordships of the Duc de Nemours, settled upon his daughter by Louis XI. ; and he had no sooner procured a decree of the parliament declaring the donation of non-avail, and restoring these possessions to the king, than he proceeded upon other grounds to attack the right of M. de Bourbon to the duchies of Auvergne and Bourbonnais and the county of Clermont. Here, however, the parliament refused to ratify his decision ; alleging that in all transfers of territory made among different members of the reigning family the law had always been subordinate to the will of the monarch, and that the precedent of setting aside the acts of the four preceding sovereigns would have a tendency so dangerous that they could not immediately decide a point of such importance. Enough had, however, been done to convince M. de Bourbon that the Duchesse d'Angoulême was determined to effect his ruin ; a conviction in which he was strengthened by the fact that all his public revenues were stopped upon the pretence of necessities of state ; while the duchies and counties which were still objects of litigation were placed under

sequestration until the final sentence should be pronounced.

The indignation of the connétable accordingly exceeded all bounds ; nor did he make an effort to conceal the nature of his feelings, either towards Louise de Savoie herself or against the king, who was weak enough to submit to the arbitrary will of a woman without dignity or character. This unguarded vehemence of language was quickly conveyed to the ears of Madame d'Angoulême, who revenged herself by urging on the reluctant parliament to a decision, and by overlooking, either wilfully or blindly, the possible consequences of an animosity which she had carried to persecution.

So important a struggle became, as a natural consequence, known and canvassed at every European Court ; and the emperor no sooner ascertained the pitch of reckless exasperation at which Bourbon had arrived than he despatched to France the Comte de Beaurain, his lieutenant-general in the Low Countries, and a cousin of M. de Chièvres, his late minister, who arrived in the spring of 1523 at Moulins, where the duke was then residing, and exhibiting an ostentatious display of magnificence better calculated to deepen the dislike of Francis and his mother than to propitiate their favour. The imperial envoy found him in precisely the temper which Charles had anticipated. He had become careless of the interests of France ; regardless of her claims upon him as a citizen ; disgusted alike with her laws, her policy, and her honours ; chafed at the insult which had been

put upon him at the head of his troops, and irritated by the injustice which was stripping him of his civil privileges. Adrien de Croï, Sire de Beaurain, was no stranger to Bourbon, having been his prisoner two years previously at Hesdin, where, during the brief captivity of the former, a mutual regard had been engendered ; and thus the duke did not scruple to lay before him the extent of his grievances, or to admit that he should not hesitate to adopt any measure by which he might revenge himself upon his persecutors.

This opportunity now presented itself ; and with all the bitterness of desperation Bourbon listened to the terms proposed by the emperor, who offered, in the event of his abandoning the cause of Francis for his own, to assist him in the recovery of the estates which had been wrested from him, and, moreover, to give him the hand of his sister Eleanora, the widowed Queen of Portugal, with the province of Beaujolais as her dower. These proposals were, however, insufficient to satisfy the vengeance of the connétable, who declared that in return for his allegiance to Charles he demanded not only what the emperor had shown himself ready to concede, but also that Henry VIII. should be admitted to a league whereby France should be dismembered ; Languedoc, Burgundy, Champagne, and Picardy be relinquished to Charles himself ; Provence and Dauphiny annexed to his own appanage of the Bourbonnais and Auvergne, and erected into a kingdom ; and the remainder of France delivered over to Henry.

The terms of the duke, monstrous as they were,

were accepted by M. de Beaurain without hesitation ; and it was then decided that Bourbon, in order to facilitate the success of the project, should endeavour to take possession of the king's person on his passage through some of the provinces ; or, in the event of his failing to accomplish this object, should, so soon as Francis had crossed the Alps to rejoin the army in Italy, raise a force of a thousand nobles with their followers and six thousand infantry, and, uniting his troops with twelve thousand lansquenets whom the emperor would march through Franche-Comté, impede the French king on his return.

From Moulins M. de Beaurain at once proceeded to England to negotiate for his imperial master ; and he was immediately followed by the Seigneur de Châteaufort, the chamberlain of the connétable, charged with a letter from the duke to Wolsey, and authorized to proffer upon his part such terms to Henry as were calculated to remove every objection which he might otherwise have felt to embark in so extreme and treacherous an undertaking. The result was such as Bourbon had anticipated. The English monarch, dazzled by the prospect of a second throne, by an Act dated May the 17th, 1523, gave full powers to two of his counsellors to treat with the connétable, under the title of " Most Serene Prince ;" and also authorized his ambassadors in Spain to negotiate with him upon his swearing homage and fealty to himself as King of France ; and a short time subsequently he despatched a disguised envoy to Bourg-en-Bresse (where the conné-

table was residing for a time, in order to be in the more immediate neighbourhood of his new allies), to receive his pledge that he would fulfil the conditions of the compact which he had made without reservation. This pledge was instantly given by the duke, and preparations were made without further delay by Henry and his minister for the advance of an English army upon Normandy.

While these secret negotiations were thus progressing, Francis, notwithstanding his recent reverses in Italy, the menacing position of the enemy, the helplessness of his frontiers, and the impoverished state of his army, which was still suffering from need of the long-withheld supplies, was wasting both time and money in the most reckless extravagance. The expenses of his Court amounted to the enormous sum of a hundred and fifty thousand livres monthly. Balls, banquets, tilting matches, and hunting parties absorbed all his attention ; and meanwhile the kingdom was thrown into a state of fearful disorder by the troops, who, having no other means of sustaining life, were existing upon the pillage of the inhabitants ; at first confining their outrages to the scattered villages, and contenting themselves with rapine ; but ultimately even entering the towns, and committing enormities of every description. Nor was the capital exempt from its own horrors, the plague having declared itself in a form so fearful that hundreds fell victims to its ravages, and continued, month after month, with a virulence which palsied the energies of the faculty. Street tumults were of

continual occurrence ; and, as upon all similar occasions, the people murmured loudly, attributing their sufferings to human agency ; while assassinations became so frequent that, in order to appease the popular fury, Francis found himself compelled, early in the spring, to take up his abode in the palace of the Tournelles, and endeavour to calm the excited spirit of the mob by showing himself among them. The effort was, however, unavailing ; and as he soon wearied of a position as useless as it was dangerous, he threatened to withdraw to Amboise, when the *sénéchal* of the palace caused two gibbets to be erected at the entrance, in order to inspire more respect for the king's person ; but even this extreme demonstration failed in its effect, for they were removed during the night by a body of men armed to the teeth ; and Francis, indignant at the insult which had been offered to him in his own capital, after having held a bed of justice on the 30th of June, and declared his firm determination to punish the authors of these outrages, left the capital, and, as we have already stated, was soon immersed once more in pleasure and dissipation.

By a fortunate combination of circumstances the only frontiers on the north of France which it was necessary to defend at this juncture were those of Champagne and Picardy ; but even near these, exposed as they were to the double attack of the English and the Flemish, Francis neglected to assemble an army, contenting himself by ordering the Duc de Vendôme, who was governor of the latter pro-

vince, to distribute his forces between the several fortresses, and instructing M. de la Tremouille, who had charge of the former with five hundred lances, to raise ten thousand infantry, which he effected ; but as they were taken from the plough and other agricultural pursuits, they were ill-fitted to encounter and contend successfully with well-disciplined and experienced troops.

Adrian VI. had laboured, from the moment at which he ascended the papal throne, to re-establish the peace of Europe, and had even avoided an interview with the emperor ; but he had nevertheless felt aggrieved that the French king should persevere in his pretensions, and consequently make a chilling reply to his advances. His natural prejudices were in favour of Charles ; and although he had succeeded in reconciling the Dukes of Urbino and Ferrara with the Holy See, he had nevertheless detached them from the interests of France ; and the French troops had no sooner evacuated Italy than he addressed to the Venetian senate a letter in which he urged them to renounce an alliance which could only tend to involve the papal dominions in renewed bloodshed by encouraging the French in a fresh attempt to effect the conquest of Lombardy.

The appeal was not without its effect ; Venice, separated as she was from France, and menaced by all Europe, was in no position to maintain so unequal and precarious a warfare ; but still the senate were anxious to gain time. They were aware that they had already lost much and gained nothing by their

French alliance; while Francis had recently despatched envoys to inform them that in the spring of 1523 he should enter Lombardy with a powerful army, and they were fearful of committing themselves. Their indecision was, however, terminated by a letter from their ambassador at Paris, who assured them that the French king was no longer an enemy to be feared, because he had so entirely abandoned himself to sensuality and dissipation that he expended on his own selfish gratification the principal portion of the national revenue; while his whole thoughts were so absorbed by these pursuits that he seldom—and even then at the most inopportune moments—suffered a serious reflection or representation to divert him from his mistresses or his amusements; and that in order to organize an army he must either sell or mortgage the royal domains, or exhaust the kingdom by the most fearful exactions; that all France accused his supineness for the misfortunes which had recently supervened; and that, moreover, there were reasons for suspecting that a powerful prince of his family was about to abandon his allegiance.

This communication at once determined the Venetian senators. Aware that they could place implicit trust in the report of their representative, they announced to the Pope their readiness to abandon the cause of a monarch who was thus careless of his own interests; and on the 3d of August a general European league was signed against France, whereby the several sovereigns bound themselves to mutual

support in their respective aggressions or reclaimers.

A new cause of anxiety, moreover, presented itself at this time in the jeopardy of the island of Rhodes, where the knights of St. John of Jerusalem had established themselves for the avowed purpose of carrying on a warfare against the Turks, in which they had for some time been eminently successful under the brave and skilful guidance of their grand-master, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. Soliman, who had been elected to the sovereignty of Turkey during the preceding year, and who had already evinced his belligerent propensities by the invasion of the Hungarian frontiers and the capture of Belgrade, had recently turned his attention towards Rhodes; and the grand-master, on becoming apprized of his hostile intentions, had hastened to fortify his stronghold, and had collected about him a number of his bravest knights in order to repel the attack. The Turkish force proved, however, to be overwhelming, no less than three hundred vessels, with two hundred thousand troops, being despatched against the Christians, which were shortly followed by the Sultan himself, to whom the capture of this stronghold was important alike as a matter of safety and of religion.

The defence of the knights was worthy of their reputation; and for six entire months they held out against the gigantic enemy to whom they were opposed, in the full reliance that the princes of Christendom would not allow the declared champions of their holy faith to be defeated from lack of help.

But in this trust they were unfortunately deceived ; the jealous animosity which existed between the emperor and the French king rendering them severally averse to act in concert even in a cause which involved one of their dearest interests. In vain did the Pope conjure them to lay aside their personal differences for the time, and to unite in protecting the safety of the Church. They remained deaf to his appeal ; and, ultimately, the total exhaustion both of provisions and ammunition compelled the gallant grand-master to capitulate, and to retire with the slender remnant of his noble followers from the island which they had so bravely defended (and whose ruined citadel and crumbling walls attested the perseverance with which they had been defended) to Viterbo, where the Pope offered them an asylum until they could again establish themselves in a manner more befitting the dignity of their order, and where they ultimately remained until, some years subsequently, Charles V., who was anxious to secure their services, made them a grant of the island of Malta.

Thus were things situated when the Maréchal de Lautrec arrived at Court ; and he had been sufficiently long absent to enable his enemies to enhance in the mind of the king every cause, or supposed cause, of complaint which could be adduced against him. The generals who had assisted in the taking of the Milanese, and who now saw all their prowess rendered unavailing, were loud in their censures, and joined the faction of the Duchesse d'Angoulême in

pouring out upon the head of the unlucky commander the full vial of their wrath ; while the king himself, mortified by a defeat which afforded such just cause of triumph to his enemies, and incensed by this new cause of heartburning and difficulty, did not attempt to oppose the reasonings of those who counselled him to refuse all communication with the *maréchal*, but, immediately that his return to France was made known to him, peremptorily declared his determination to deny him all access to his presence.

M. de Lautrec,—he coldly remarked to the few faithful adherents of the unsuccessful general who still ventured to urge the expediency of his not denying an audience to one who had served him long and faithfully before these last reverses,—M. de Lautrec could have nothing to communicate to his sovereign save that he had basely betrayed the trust which had been reposed in him, and by his supineness or ignorance suffered the glory of France to be tarnished, not only in his own person but in that of her king. In vain, for the first time, did even Madame de Châteaubriand implore and weep ; the love of the monarch for the fair *Françoise de Foix* was waxing cold, and he had begun to discover that the Court and even the city contained many beauties no less attractive than the frail wife of M. de Châteaubriand. The chain already hung more loosely about him ; and he was, moreover, awakened from a dream of pleasure by the apparition of one who came only to recall him to reflections ill-suited

to the life of festivity and splendour in which he was indulging at the moment.

The favourite was not, however, to be thus baffled. Lautrec had relied upon her promise to reconcile him with the king; and she no sooner found her personal efforts to effect this reconciliation unavailing than she turned for aid to the Duc de Bourbon, her influence over whom has been already stated. The moment was an inauspicious one for the connétable to interfere in so delicate a question, but he was aware that the Duchesse d'Angoulême was untiring in her efforts to ruin not only the young countess herself but all her family, and this consciousness sufficed to decide him. Since the commencement of his secret negotiations with the emperor he had considered it expedient to appear more frequently in the circle of the king, where he affected entirely to overlook the coldness with which he was received, and revenged himself by an exhibition of splendour which was gall and wormwood to the spirit of Louise de Savoie; and the more so that his general popularity had been rather increased than diminished since the commencement of their legal struggle. Bourbon was aware also of the primary cause of the disasters in Milan, and he well knew the anxiety of the duchess-mother to prevent all confidential communications between her son and the maréchal; and thus doubly urged, on the one side by his passion for Françoise de Foix, and on the other by his desire to humble Madame d'Angoulême, he at once promised to make the cause of Lautrec

his own, and to obtain for him the desired and important interview.

It was not, however, without considerable difficulty that he succeeded ; and that he eventually did so is probably to be ascribed to the conviction of Francis that it would be dangerous to incur the further resentment of so powerful a noble. The audience was therefore granted, but the king's reception of the *maréchal* was stern and ungracious.

"You come to tell me, sir, that you are beaten," he commenced, without replying to the profound salutation of M. de Lautrec, who had paused at the very threshold of the apartment ; "that through your carelessness and want of zeal you have sacrificed many of my bravest generals, victimized a gallant army, and lost one of her finest provinces to France. You might have spared both me and yourself so dishonourable a recital. Your despatches have told me more than enough already, and my time will be better spent in endeavouring to repair the fault of which you have been guilty than in listening to your excuses."

"I am at a loss to know by what act of my own I have merited such a reception from your majesty," said the *maréchal* firmly.

"How, sir!" exclaimed Francis with increasing vehemence, "do you ask the reason of a displeasure which you might have anticipated? Have you not lost the Milanese? Have you not tarnished the glory of the French arms? Have you not—" he

paused for an instant, and before he could resume his reproaches Lautrec interposed proudly—

“No, Sire ; I am guiltless of each and all of these accusations. That the Milanese is in the hands of your majesty's enemies is unfortunately too certain ; but the loss is to be attributed rather to your majesty than to myself. Your cavalry were eighteen months in arrear of pay ; and I had already warned both your majesty and your ministers that unless I received a supply of money within a given period it would be impossible for me to enforce obedience or to prevent desertion. If, therefore, I was thus apprehensive of the effect of this destitution upon the troops of France, fighting under the banners of their own king, and jealous of their own glory, your majesty may believe that I had small faith in the fidelity of the Swiss, who, eager only for gain, were little likely to sacrifice their individual interests to those of a foreign sovereign ; nor did I overrate the danger. By those mercenaries, clamorous to replace by rapine the wages which had been withheld from them, I was fated to endure the mortification of being compelled to give battle to the enemy at a disadvantage, and to see my authority disregarded at the moment of danger, only to find myself abandoned by the very troops to whom I owed this jeopardy, and who might have been secured to our cause had I been enabled to satisfy their claims. You will pardon my warmth, Sire, but my only fault—and I admit it to have been a grievous one—was my weakness in according faith to pro-

mises which I now find were made only to betray me."

"And the four hundred thousand crowns, M. le Maréchal?" exclaimed the king somewhat less sharply; "surely they might, had they been properly dispensed, have silenced these clamours for a time."

"They would have done more," replied Lautrec, "they would have saved the duchy; but no portion of that promised supply ever crossed the Alps."

"Let M. de Semblançay be instantly summoned," cried Francis, with a kindling eye, to the usher on duty; "it may be that we have done you injustice, M. le Maréchal; and yet—there must be some mistake, the Baron de Semblançay is an old and tried subject; he has never yet failed either me or my predecessors. None knew better than he the difficulty with which so large a sum was raised, nor the importance of its immediate transmission. Come forward, father, come forward," he continued, as the old Minister of Finance, whom he was accustomed thus to address, and for whom he affected an attachment exceeding even that of a sovereign towards his most favoured subject, made his appearance at the threshold. "What is this which M. de Lautrec tells us? He asserts that the four hundred thousand crowns raised by my order for the supply of the army of Italy never reached his camp! Through what channel were they transmitted?"

"M. le Maréchal has rightly informed your Majesty," said De Semblançay. "Her highness the

duchess claimed the money as I was about to expedite it, by virtue of her authority as regent of the kingdom, and I hold her receipt for the whole sum."

"My mother!" murmured Francis, as a red spot rose to his brow, "there must be some mistake; but she can doubtless explain it. Follow me, M. le Ministre."

The usher threw back the heavy tapestry which veiled the door of the audience chamber, and the king disappeared behind it with a rapid step, followed by M. de Semblançay.

When they reached the private apartments of Madame d'Angoulême, she rose with a smile to welcome her son, but Francis was too much excited to waste time in empty courtesies. "Do you know what you have done, madame?" he exclaimed, as he threw himself upon a seat; "you have lost me the Milanese."

The duchess raised her fine eyes in astonishment. "Your majesty is in error," she said with a slight sneer, "that was a feat reserved for M. de Lautrec—for the brother of Madame de Châteaubriand."

"I repeat, madame, that you have lost me the Milanese, by withholding the supplies which I had destined for my troops."

"I deny the charge," said the duchess haughtily. "Who dares to accuse me of this?"

"M. de Semblançay is my informant," was the reply of the king, as he glanced alternately at his mother and the venerable minister.

"How, sir!" exclaimed Louise de Savoie, with a

frown which might have paralyzed a less firm spirit than that of the old baron, "dare you assert that I have held back the monies of the state?"

"It is at least certain, madame," replied M. de Semblançay, "that the sum of four hundred thousand crowns, destined by his majesty for the service in the Milanese, was paid over by me into your hands, at your express command, and that I hold your receipt, which I demanded at the time."

"But that sum, M. le Ministre," said the duchess, fixing her eyes steadily upon those of the old statesman, as if to prompt his answer, "that sum, you are aware, was due to me, and was the amount of the savings of many years, placed in your hands for better security, and of which I chanced at that particular moment to stand in need. You should have explained this matter to the king."

The minister was silent.

"Why did you not inform me of so important a circumstance, M. de Semblançay?" asked Francis impatiently. "We might then have applied some remedy, whereas the evil is now beyond recall. Why did you not at once acquaint me with the whole of the affair?"

"I was not aware, sir," was the steady reply, "that her highness believed herself to have any claim upon the money in question, or that she had been in the habit of limiting her outlay within her means."

"Do you intend the king to understand that I had not entrusted you with that sum?" asked Louise de Savoie emphatically.

"Assuredly, madame. It is my first duty to justify myself to my sovereign; and I therefore, with all due respect for your highness, religiously declare that I have never held in my hands monies which were your private property."

"Have a care, sir!" exclaimed the duchess, in a tone of menace; but before she could proceed to give utterance to the threat that quivered on her lips the young king had sprung up——

"Enough, enough!" he said, with an emotion which he was unable to control, "we need not aggravate an evil which is already too great. Let this subject never be renewed; and may we in future better understand how to uphold our common interests."

The upright old minister was not, however, to be thus silenced, and he forthwith insisted that commissioners should be appointed to examine the public accounts, and to report the result of their labours to the king; thus forcing upon him the conviction of his own honesty and the treachery of his mother; a pertinacity which was never forgiven by the vindictive duchess, who felt that the confidence which had hitherto been placed in her by her son must be seriously shaken by such an exposure.

Nevertheless she did not hesitate to complain that she had been subjected to an affront which it was the duty of Francis to avenge, and she even urged him to displace M. de Semblançay; but the annoyance to which he had been subjected through her avarice, and her desire to injure the Maréchal

de Lautrec, even at the expense of his own honour, was too galling and too recent to render her expostulations successful, and he firmly refused to commit so flagrant an act of injustice. A vengeance like that of Louise de Savoie could, however, afford to wait. She was aware of the fickle nature of Francis, who, unlike herself, was incapable of nourishing a lasting passion either of love or hate ; and she felt that death alone could deprive her of her victim. Nor had the venerable minister a less inveterate enemy in the Chancellor Duprat, who was continually thwarted in his measures by the uncompromising probity of his colleague, and who gladly made common cause with Madame d'Angoulême when he ascertained her enmity against him.

Once more Madame de Châteaubriand triumphed. The king, on his next interview with Lautrec, assured him that he was perfectly exonerated from blame, and a fresh struggle commenced between the mother and the mistress. The Court was thus divided into two separate factions. At the head of one was Louise de Savoie, M. de Savoie her brother, the chancellor, and Bonnivet, who, despite his passion for the fair favourite, could not resist the blandishments of the duchess, but who laboured assiduously to secure her interest in the furtherance of his own views of ambition and aggrandizement, and who was further bound to her through their mutual hatred of Bourbon. It was at her instigation and with her assistance that he had built the magnificent château to which we have already alluded as

so great a mortification to the connétable ; with her sanction that he encouraged the profligacy of the king—the more readily, perhaps, because he was not sorry to detach him from Madame de Châteaubriand, although Francis either had, or affected to have, remained blind to their mutual attachment, even when it had long ceased to be a matter of surmise ; and by her influence that he was enabled to pursue a course of reckless and extravagant ostentation, which rendered him the wonder and the envy of all the less fortunate courtiers ; while to the party of the duchess-mother were also attached the young and idle nobility, to whom the freedom of her circle and the beauty of the women whom she collected about her formed a greater attraction than they could find elsewhere.

The faction of Madame de Châteaubriand was less numerous but still formidable. Her own brothers, and all the most celebrated generals of the time, were in her train, and while in the licentious Court of Madame d'Angoulême nothing was discussed save love and pleasure, honour and renown were the leading topics among the customary guests of Françoise de Foix.

And amid all this rivalry and bitterness of spirit the patient queen lived on in purity and piety, weeping over the evil that she saw, and thankful for the peace which she was enabled to preserve about her. Attached, even from her childhood, to the Duc de Bourbon as to a loved and honoured brother, she could not forego the hope of still claiming him by a

title which he had long borne in her heart, and consequently continued her efforts to unite him with the *Princesse Renée*. Nor was the duke insensible to her regard or to the pain which she evinced at the persecution to which he was subjected. She was the one bond which yet linked him to his country—the one and only object which aroused a feeling of remorse within him as he reflected upon the enormity of his revenge. But to his other mortifications had been added that of learning that the king's mother had obtained so great an influence over the mind of the princess as to induce her to declare that she could no longer entertain the idea of an alliance with a noble who must, should the legal proceedings instituted against him prove fatal to his claims, become one of the poorest princes in Europe. Yet still the good queen trusted to overcome these difficulties, and whenever the duke appeared at Court he found his warmest welcome ever proceed from her lips.

Fresh demands were at this period made on the attention of the French king by the reduced and famished state of the garrison which, under Jacques de Daillon, Seigneur de Lude,¹ had during the space

¹ Jacques de Daillon, Seigneur de Lude, was seneschal of Anjou, and captain of fifty men-at-arms. He distinguished himself greatly in the defence of Bresse against the Venetians during the reign of Louis XII., by whom he had been entrusted with the government of that province, having maintained himself for ten days in the citadel after the enemy, by effecting an entrance through one of the great sewers, had obtained possession of the town. He was also celebrated for his gallantry throughout the wars of Italy, Lombardy, and Ferrara. He was the son of the governor and favourite of Louis XI., and the father of Guy de Daillon, Governor of Poitou, who in his youth had been standard-bearer to the Duc de Nemours.

of an entire year kept the Spanish army in check before Fontarabia, but which had now become so utterly exhausted by fatigue and famine that he announced the impossibility of further resistance unless he could be immediately relieved. The fortress was surrounded on all sides by the enemy, and although numerous attempts had already been made to convey supplies to him by sea, all had failed through the vigilance of the Spanish privateers who guarded the coast, and disease and want were making hourly havoc among the already diminished troops.

In this emergency, although once more dreaming of the conquest of the Milanese, and anxious to collect a powerful army for that expedition, Francis lost not a moment in despatching M. de Châtillon at the head of a large force to the relief of the besieged garrison; but this reinforcement was delayed by the sudden and serious illness of its commander, which soon terminated fatally, and rendered it necessary to halt the troops upon their march until another general could arrive to take the command—a circumstance which had nearly proved fatal to the success of the enterprise. The Marquis de la Palice, however, by whom M. de Châtillon was replaced, hastened to repair the evil, and at once advanced to Fontarabia, although the arrival of a force which had been despatched by sea to co-operate with him had been prevented by contrary winds.

As he approached the beleaguered city he found

the Spanish army encamped upon the river-bank, and prepared to dispute his passage ; but resolved to effect, if possible, the immediate rescue of the unfortunate garrison, he would not suffer the inequality of numbers to delay his purpose, and accordingly commenced a heavy fire of artillery upon the enemy's lines from the opposite side of the stream. The guns were skilfully worked, and created so much havoc that the Spaniards gave way, and under cover of the smoke he succeeded in crossing, when, being opposed by Comte Guillaume de Furstemberg at the head of six thousand lansquenets, he made so desperate a charge that they were completely routed, and despite their numerical superiority were compelled to retreat in disorder to the mountains.

The enemy thus driven back, the marquis entered the city in triumph, with his supplies both of provisions and arms, and having restored the garrison to its former strength, replaced the exhausted but gallant Comte de Lude in his command by M. Franget,¹ who had been the lieutenant-general of the Comte de Châtillon, and in whose arms he had died. The sufferings of the little garrison, which had so pertinaciously held out month after month,

¹ Captain Franget was a soldier of experience and tried valour, who, however, suffered himself to tarnish his military reputation by delivering up Fontarabia to the enemy after a brief siege of eight days. Francis I. was so indignant at this act of cowardice that he condemned him to lose his head, but was dissuaded from carrying out his threat by the entreaties of M. de Lude, who pleaded the gallantry of his former achievements. The sentence was consequently commuted to expulsion from the service. His sword was broken, his military rank annulled, and himself exiled from the Court.

had been of the most frightful description. After having for some time subsisted upon their horses, the troops were compelled to have recourse to every species of vermin, such as cats, rats, and dogs ; and ultimately, when even these failed, to devour the skins of the animals they had slain and the parchments in the public offices, which they boiled down as the general food of both officers and men. The appearance of the survivors was consequently wretched in the extreme ; and M. de Lude hastened, immediately upon the appointment of his successor, to pay his respects to his sovereign,—by whom he was cordially and honourably received,—and thence to his estates, in order to recruit his strength and recover from the effects of his long and melancholy privation.

The intelligence of the relief of Fontarabia somewhat tempered the exultation of the emperor, whose recent successes in Italy had led him to anticipate equal good fortune beyond the Pyrenees, and he at once determined to counteract the partial triumph of Francis by urging forward the compact into which, through the medium of the Duc de Bourbon, he had already entered with Henry VIII. He soon, however, discovered from the tone of the correspondence into which he entered for this purpose palpable evidence of the changed feelings of the English cardinal, who had never forgiven Charles for the falsification of his pledges regarding the papacy, and the substitution of the comparatively obscure Cardinal of Tortosa for himself upon the throne of St. Peter—a substitution which, as he was

well aware, had been effected through his sole agency. Nevertheless Charles did not despair; he had studied the nature of the man with whom he had to deal; and once more he revived the question of the triple crown, assuring the English minister that the age and infirmities of Adrian VI. rendered it impossible that he should long enjoy the dignity to which he had attained, while Wolsey himself, still in the prime of life, was his only fitting successor; and pledging himself that should the cardinal exert his influence to induce the English king to accept his proposition of a treaty of alliance against France, he might himself depend on his own support upon the decease of the reigning pope.

This correspondence, which was carried on throughout a couple of months, ultimately so changed its character that Charles, satisfied his point was gained with the minister, resolved once more to visit England in person and explain in detail his views and projects to the sovereign—a piece of consummate policy which he carried into effect by landing at Dover near the end of May, where he was received by Henry VIII. with as much cordiality as heretofore, and soon succeeded in rendering him equally anxious with himself for the invasion of the French territories. Mutual courtesies were exchanged between the two monarchs, Charles conferring upon the Earl of Surrey the commission of admiral in his dominions, and Henry investing his imperial guest with the order of the garter. Nor did the politic emperor fail, by

every means in his power, to remove the mistrust of the cardinal-legate, to whom he affected to explain the imperative reasons which had compelled him to favour the election of Adrian. VI., and whose confidence he once more purchased by a life-pension of nine thousand golden crowns.

As a declaration of war against France became inevitable on the part of the English king after this compact with Charles, it was necessary to discover some pretext sufficiently plausible to justify a step which must necessarily involve the interests of all Europe; and eventually neither Henry nor his minister could devise any excuse more rational than a presumed indignity shown to the former as arbitrator between Francis and the emperor, by the refusal of the French sovereign to give up Fontarabia at his suggestion, and the fact that Francis had permitted the Duc d'Aubigny to visit Scotland, where he had, as they alleged, excited an ill feeling against both Henry VIII. and his sister.

The latter argument was, perhaps, less flimsy than the first, inasmuch as it is certain that Francis, who had long suspected the bad faith of Henry, had, with a view of regaining the same influence over the Scotch which had been exercised by his predecessors, instead of leaving the regency of the kingdom during the minority of James V. in the hands of his mother Marguerite, the sister of Henry VIII., desired Jean, Duc d'Aubigny, the nephew of James III., to return at once to Scotland, and to claim his part in the government.

Although born a subject of France, the Scotch parliament at once recognized the right of the duke to share the regency with the queen-mother; and D'Aubigny, whose prejudices were all in favour of his native country, exerted himself to induce the nation to declare war against England; by which means, although he did not succeed in his attempt, he created considerable commotion on the border. Francis, meanwhile, deemed it expedient to write to the English monarch, asserting that the duke had acted without any authority from himself, and had even left France without his permission; but the reply of Henry VIII. not only denied his belief of the fact, but was, moreover, so studiously offensive in the terms of that denial, that every doubt as to the hostility which he bore him was removed from the mind of the French king.

Sir Thomas Cheyne, the English ambassador in France, received instructions in the month of May to urge once more upon Francis the cession of Fontarabia, and to remonstrate with him upon his interference in Scotland; and as the king was at that moment absent from Paris, the minister demanded an audience of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, to whom he declared the nature of the instructions which had reached him from his Court, when Louise de Savoie expressed the strongest desire to effect a reconciliation between the two monarchs, reminding the ambassador of the confidence and good feeling which had existed between them so recently, and declaring that her son was anxious for its con-

tinuance. She, moreover, undertook to acquaint the king with what had passed during the interview, and to use all her influence to preserve a friendly understanding between the two countries.

In a subsequent audience of Francis himself, Sir Thomas Cheyne reiterated the demands and remonstrances of his sovereign, to which the French king replied as he had previously done by letter ; and on an intimation from the ambassador that, in the event of his declining to comply with the terms proposed by his master, and persisting in hostilities against the emperor, the English monarch would consider himself bound in conscience to declare against him, Francis proudly replied, that so long as Henry acted according to a sense of right and justice, he could ask no more ; that the emperor had been the first aggressor, but that he had long seen with how little favour his own interests had been regarded by England during the conferences which had taken place at Calais ; and that, unless Henry were determined to award more even-handed justice for the future, he would do well to leave Charles and himself to settle their own differences. He moreover declared that the emperor had no more right to the Milanese than he himself could advance to the kingdom of Spain, and that he esteemed himself the equal of Charles upon all points, and would have been both glad and able to serve Henry for his love alone more heartily than his rival would do for both his love and his treasures. All he now asked, therefore, he said, was to be left free to follow out his

own measures, and if this were conceded without foreign interference, he did not despair of rendering Charles "one of the poorest princes in Christendom."

The English ambassador, chagrined by the conviction that his errand was one of injustice, and convinced by the resolute attitude of the French king that he would not willingly make the required concessions, and thus involve himself in a peril of which the consequences might prove fatal to his throne, endeavoured to induce Admiral Bonnivet, who was present at the conference, to prevail upon his sovereign to accept the proposition for a truce which he was authorized to make; but the haughty favourite at once replied that he would rather see his master in his grave than urge him to a measure which involved his honour.

Thus foiled on all hands, Sir Thomas Cheyne next informed the king that the emperor, who was about to depart for Spain, had entrusted the protection of the Low Countries during his absence to the English monarch, a charge which he had agreed to undertake. But even this insidious measure did not bend the spirit of Francis, who replied in a tone of biting sarcasm that the emperor had resolved wisely, as there could be no doubt that Henry VIII. was far more capable of defending the realm than its own sovereign, while the arrangement afforded clear evidence of the political bias of both parties.

"Thus much, however," he added, "I will still

say, that I have in no wise deserved that your king should take part against me with my enemy ; from our past friendship I looked for help rather than hindrance at his hands ; but if there be no remedy, and the king's highness will have it thus, I have no fear but that I shall be able to defend both myself and my realm with God's help, although, for his sake, I shall never again put faith in any prince living. Moreover, if he loses me now, I vow that henceforth he hath lost me for ever. But"—and for the first time his voice quivered for an instant—"I will not believe that he can play me false ; for of myself I may truly declare that the extremity of this war doth not grieve me half so much as to lose a friend whom I esteemed beyond all others."

At the termination of the interview Francis returned to Lyons, and on the 29th of May the English herald who had been despatched for that purpose repaired thither, and in the palace of the archbishop, where the king had taken up his abode, made a formal declaration of war on the part of his royal master, to which Francis replied coldly and proudly, and hostilities forthwith commenced. The Earl of Surrey, at the head of the combined fleets of England and Spain, commenced his operations by destroying several of the coast towns of Normandy and Brittany ; and then, abandoning his ships, took the command of the troops on land, and proceeded to operate upon the French frontier, when he was joined by the Comte de Buren, the lieutenant-general of the emperor in the Low

Countries, their joint army amounting to eighteen thousand men.

Nevertheless Francis evinced no uneasiness. He trusted that the strength of his frontier of Picardy, whose fortresses were efficiently armed and garrisoned, would suffice to arrest the progress of both the English and Flemish troops, while the Pyrenees defended him from the attacks of the Spaniards ; and he still proceeded with the organization of the army, with which he once more anticipated the conquest of the Milanese. The care of the seat of war was meanwhile confided to the Duc de Vendôme, and Francis availed himself of the threatened invasion to remove a silver screen erected by Louis XI. round the tomb of St. Martin, and to coin it into money for the payment of the troops.

While he was thus engaged he received intelligence that his generals had drawn the Duc d'Aerschott and a strong party of the imperial troops into a snare, from which they were not likely to escape, through the means of a soldier of the garrison of Guise, who was instructed by the Seigneur de Longueval, the governor, to volunteer to effect the entrance of the Flemish commander through a gate of the city which he was appointed to guard. Aerschott, having closely questioned the man, who professed great discontent with his position and weariness of the service in which he was engaged, fell into the trap that had been laid for him ; and arrangements were made, immediately after Easter, for profiting by the supposed treason. The duke

was to approach the city with a force of picked men on whom he could depend, while the Marquis de Fiennes, the Governor of Flanders, was to make a demonstration against T  rouenne with a strong body of troops, in order to distract the attention of the French ; and, meanwhile, precautions had been taken that when Aerschott advanced upon the city the Duc de Vend  me, the Marquis de Fleuranges, and Richard de la Pole, should cut off his retreat, and compel him to lay down his arms.

Had Vend  me executed this man  uvre without informing the king of his design, there is every reason to suppose that it would have proved successful ; but Francis had no sooner learnt his purpose and been convinced of its feasibility than he determined to assist in person at the capture of the duke, and despatched orders that no steps should be taken in the business under any pretext until he could arrive upon the spot, an object which he effected by travelling post on the very evening before the enterprise was to take place. The mere fact, however, of his sudden appearance with the army, when he was known to have been at Blois only two days previously, sufficed to arouse the suspicions of the imperialists ; and although Aerschott had already commenced his march, he immediately halted and abandoned the undertaking, convinced that some ambush had been prepared for him ; and thus, through his own puerile vanity, Francis lost an opportunity of seriously weakening the strength of his adversaries.

Mortified by a failure which he had himself induced, the king then directed M. de Vendôme to advance with his forces and relieve Téroouenne, before which Fiennes had sat down, little anticipating so formidable an enemy. The militia of Ghent, moreover, who formed a portion of his force, and who now saw themselves threatened by a peril upon which they had not calculated, immediately abandoned his camp and retreated beyond the Lys, thus creating a disorder of which the Duc de Vendôme was about to take advantage when M. de Brion, galloping up to the lines, once more commanded him to retard the attack until the arrival of the king, who was preparing to join in the battle. Mortified as he was, the duke was compelled to obey, and before Francis reached the field M. de Fiennes had time to extricate himself and to secure a safe position.

Notwithstanding these failures the French king had as yet experienced no positive check; and Surrey, disheartened by the slow and unsatisfactory progress of the war, in which he had reaped neither honour nor success, while he had sustained severe loss, proceeded to lay siege to the town of Hesdin, of which he thought himself secure, as the fortifications were imperfect, and the garrison comprized only thirty gendarmes and about seventeen hundred foot soldiers. Herein, however, he deceived himself, as the Sire du Bier, by whom it was commanded, made so gallant a resistance with his slender garrison that after he had spent a fortnight

before the walls he was compelled to raise the siege, the incessant rains having seriously affected his troops, while they had gained no evident advantage over the enemy ; and thus foiled in an enterprise which he had originally regarded as insignificant, he abandoned the attempt and marched homeward with his army, disgracing both himself and his cause by the wanton and needless cruelties that were committed on the route.

Under these circumstances Francis considered himself once more at liberty to pursue his measures against Milan, and to detach from the army of M. de Vendôme the Duke of Suffolk, known in France as the White Rose, the pretender to the throne of England, whose claims he now openly espoused, with his lansquenets and two or three thousand Picards, and to despatch them to Lyons, where the army destined to invade Italy was to assemble in the month of August. Bonnivet, with six thousand French troops, was at the same time to cross Mount Cenis and to establish himself at Suza ; while Montmorency was to join him there with twelve thousand infantry, which he was commissioned to raise in Switzerland. Francis himself was to join the army near Turin, and meanwhile Prosper Colonna, who had been appointed general of the Italian league, was busied in fortifying the passes of Tesino, in order to defend the entrance of the Milanese.

The French king had not, however, reached Lyons when he was met by Louis de Brézé, the Senechal of Normandy, who apprized him that his

person was in danger from a plot which had been formed against him, and which involved the safety of his kingdom.

Startled but not convinced, Francis desired to be more fully informed of its nature and extent ; upon which De Brézé confided to him that he had gained his intelligence from two Norman gentlemen who had been tampered with by a powerful prince of his own family, who had endeavoured to induce them to facilitate the entrance of the English troops into their province ; a fact which the king had no sooner ascertained than he determined to delay his departure from France until he had fathomed the whole conspiracy.

Before he again reached Amboise the Duchesse d'Angoulême had summoned the two informers to her presence, when, throwing off their previous reserve, they openly accused the Duc de Bourbon of treason, and revealed all they knew. The consternation of Francis was unbounded. He saw too late the error which he had committed when he drove so proud a spirit to exasperation ; but, nevertheless, he as yet possessed no proof of the truth of the accusation, and he resolved to judge for himself of its plausibility.

The opportunity soon presented itself. The duke was, as we have already stated, the frequent guest of Queen Claude ; and a day or two after his own return to Amboise Francis was apprized that he was at table with her, upon which he entered the apartment abruptly, and when Bourbon would have

risen desired him to resume his seat, saying sarcastically, "So, our cousin of Bourbon is about to take a second wife ; is it not so ?"

The duke calmly replied in the negative.

"Nay, deny it not," persisted the king sharply ; "we know all your plans, sir, even those which you have concocted with the emperor, nor are we likely to overlook them."

Upon this the connétable once more rose, exclaiming, "You threaten me, Sir, when I have done nothing to deserve it ; suffer me to withdraw." And as he spoke he made a low obeisance and left the apartment. In another moment he mounted and rode from the palace attended by all the noblemen of the Court, and on the following day he retired to one of his palaces.

Convinced that he was suspected, he lost no more time in rallying about him those friends and adherents upon whom he felt that he could depend. He knew that his life was no longer safe, and that he was indebted even for the present reprieve to an indiscretion on the part of Francis of which he had not calculated the consequences. It was in vain that many of those who were attached to his interests, especially the Comte de St. Vallier,¹ the father-in-law of M. de Brézé (who in his old age had married his daughter, the young and beautiful Diane de Poitiers), represented to him that by bearing arms against his sovereign he was not only about to sacrifice all that

¹ Jean de Poitiers, Comte de St. Vallier, was captain of the king's archers.

was dearest to him—country, kindred, and friends—but also, in the event of failure, to subject himself to an ignominious death, to make common cause with an enemy who had hitherto trembled at his name, and to tarnish the glory which it had been the labour of his whole life to secure. They admitted the persecution to which he had been subjected, but reminded him that it was the result of a hatred induced by the passion which he had inspired in the breast of a vindictive woman ; that the king himself was well disposed towards him, and had only been rendered harsh by circumstances ; and that when the kingdom was threatened with invasion it had a right to look to him as one of its strongest bulwarks.

In reply to these expostulations Bourbon bitterly expatiated upon the wrong and indignity of which he had been made the victim, and bade them remember that he had been despoiled of his estates, thwarted in his projects, injured even in his affections, and that no alternative was left to him. He declared that he no longer placed confidence in the king, who had no will save that of his mother, and no hope for himself while she retained her influence in France. “Better, far better,” he exclaimed vehemently, “to trust to a prince who is his own ruler, to live a man among men, than to be subjected to the wayward fancies of a licentious woman, who knows no law but her own vices. You weep, De Vallier—you, my friend and my kinsman ; but I can weep no longer. I have not shaped my own destiny—it has been hewn out for me, and I have only to

follow it to the end. I know that none of you will betray me ; I believe that many of you will be willing to share my fortunes ; and I say to all, that let them lead to which point they may, be it a throne or a scaffold, I shall never cease to remember with gratitude and affection those who not only felt my wrongs but helped me to avenge them."

The tone of his address was so impassioned, the grievances of which he complained were so notorious, and his person was so popular, that it is scarcely wonderful that all who heard him should at once make common cause in his behalf ; and this effected he proceeded for the moment to his estate at Moulins, feigning severe illness, in order that he should not be summoned to attend the king to Italy, a command which he would have been unable to evade.

CHAPTER IV

1523

Bourbon is suspected by the king—Francis determines on his arrest—Visits him at Moulins—Double dissimulation—Francis returns to Amboise—Bourbon's sick-chamber—M. le Wartz abandons his post—Bourbon escapes to Chantille—The hunting-party—First misunderstanding between the king and Madame de Châteaubriand—Mediation of Marguerite de Valois—A conspirator—The king and M. de Pompérant—M. de Pompérant leaves Amboise—Arrest of the Comte de St. Vallier—Indignation of Francis—He despatches troops against Bourbon—Bourbon escapes to Mantua—Fate of his adherents—The English and Spanish invade France—Are compelled to retire—The command of the army of Italy is conferred upon Bonnivet—Confiscation of Bourbon's estates—A *gasconnade*—Trial of the conspirators—Diane de Poitiers—Her marriage—Her new home—She arrives at Court to intercede for the life of her father—Has an audience of Francis—The commuted sentence—Diane and her biographers.

BOURBON had not miscalculated the intentions of the king, who, suspicious of his loyalty becoming hourly stronger, had resolved to possess himself of his person ; but, as Francis could effect nothing against him in a province where the will of the duke was the only law, and as he was himself about to travel with an escort too weak to undertake his capture, he resolved to await the arrival of the troops which, under the command of De la Pole, were on their way to Lyons. In the meantime, remembering, perhaps, the provocation which the duke had received, and anxious to ascertain if it were yet possible to regain him, he

determined to deviate from his direct route and to visit him at Moulins, where he might be enabled to judge for himself of the probability of such an event.

On his arrival he was received with every demonstration of respect and deference, and introduced into the chamber of his host by M. de Pompérant, where he found him in bed, complaining of severe and painful indisposition. The king condoled with him upon his sufferings, and asked various questions as to the nature of the attack, which were calmly and readily answered by the duke ; after which, seating himself beside his pillow, he said gently and kindly : " I am informed, cousin of Bourbon, that you have been harassed and annoyed by recent circumstances ; but you are wrong to let them weigh upon your mind, for whatever may be the result of the suit and the decision of the parliament, so long as you serve me loyally you shall not be despoiled. I have heard, moreover, that you have been in treaty with the emperor, forgetting your allegiance as a French subject, and the duty which you owe to your sovereign ; but in this rumour I place no faith. Your rank as a prince of the blood, and, still more, the great deeds which you have already accomplished, render such treachery impossible, and I no more credit the report than you, on your side, should believe that I could see you deprived of your possessions."

Bourbon was not, however, to be duped with words. He had instantly comprehended the purpose of the king in thus visiting him, and he accordingly replied with equal dissimulation—admitting

that he had indeed received offers from the emperor through one of his agents, of which he had resolved to inform his majesty when he could do so personally; but that, situated as he had lately been, he had not chosen to entrust a secret of that importance to a third person, and had, consequently, awaited the arrival of the king himself in order to communicate it. He followed up this assurance by disclosing so much of what had passed as proved the anxiety of Charles to attach him to his interests, but was careful to avoid everything which might tend to compromise either himself or his friends; and, finally, he bewailed his misfortune in thus being overtaken by sickness at a moment when he should have been by the side of his sovereign, concluding, however, by assuring Francis that his physicians, notwithstanding the severity of the attack, had decided that it would not prove of long duration, and that in the course of a week or ten days he would be able to travel as far as Lyons, by easy stages, in a litter.

The suspicions of the king were in a great degree dissipated. The manner of the connétable was so calm and self-possessed, and his account of the transaction between himself and the emperor so simple and unembarrassed, that, as he rose to take his leave he urged him to be cautious of his health, and told him that he should await with impatience his arrival at Lyons.

Having, however, decided to return to Amboise to have a parting interview with his mother, whom he had again appointed regent of the kingdom dur-

ing his absence, Francis took the precaution to send a confidential person, M. Perrot de la Brétonniere, Seigneur de Wartz, to Moulins, ostensibly for the purpose of ascertaining the progress of the duke towards convalescence, but with strict orders not to lose sight of him after he was able to leave his bed, and to bring him to Lyons with all speed. This new attention on the part of the king was perfectly appreciated by Bourbon, who was aware that De Wartz was merely sent as a spy, of whom he must rid himself at the first convenient opportunity ; and he consequently affected to suffer under constant relapses of his malady, although he expressed his earnest hope that he should ere long be enabled to join the army, and evinced the greatest interest in its movements. He constantly complained bitterly of the restraint of a sickroom, and on one occasion even ventured to leave the house leaning upon the arm of his unwelcome guest, expressing his belief that the effect of the fresh air would restore his strength. On the following day he, however, complained of increased illness ; and when left for a moment alone with M. de Wartz, told him gloomily that he began to perceive that his physicians had concealed the truth, and that his disease was likely to prove fatal.

The royal emissary was thoroughly deceived, and believing that his attendance upon a deathbed could in no way serve the king he took his leave and returned to Lyons, whence he forwarded a despatch informing Francis that the duke was in

extremity. Fresh and convincing proofs had, however, by this time reached the ears of the monarch of the intended treason of the connétable, and his reply to the communication was a stringent order to his agent to return immediately to his post ; but when the letter reached Lyons, although it was obeyed upon the instant, M. de Wartz was already too late, for he found upon his arrival at Moulins that the duke had retired to his castle of Chantelle, a strong fortress, in which he was perfectly secure. To add to his mortification, he was moreover informed by a peasant whom he encountered on his way that Bourbon had passed Varenne on horseback, apparently in good health, and he thus found that his mission had signally failed.

Meanwhile such of the nobles as were implicated in the conspiracy had remained at Court, in order to avert suspicion ; and Francis had no sooner reached Amboise, where the queen, the regent, and the Duchesse d'Alençon were then residing, than he determined before his return to Lyons to give a hunting-party in the forest of Bussy, it being a marked feature in his character never to suffer public affairs, whatever their importance, to interfere with his private pleasures. The royal circle, consequently, removed to Chambord ; but even in this, his favourite residence, it was apparent to those about him that the king was ill at ease. There was a cloud upon his brow, and occasionally he glanced around him with a searching expression, as though he sought to read the hearts of the

gay and glittering courtiers who crowded the saloons.

The morning which had been fixed for the hunt was brilliant, and a numerous bevy of fair dames, all attired for the sport, were flitting through the great hall, or surrounding the chair of the queen, who sat in the centre of her ladies, engaged upon some tapestry work ; for the birth of her third son, the Prince Charles, was yet too recent to admit of her taking part in the fatiguing pleasures of the day, even had her tranquil tastes led her to desire it. The young nobles, eager for the sport, were glancing impatiently from time to time into the courtyard to watch the progress of the preparations ; and, meanwhile, Francis himself stood in the deep recess of a bay window, conversing with the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, who, in her ample riding-dress and richly plumed hat, looked even more lovely than was her wont. But still it was evident that the flattery which she would have prized the most deeply did not meet her ear upon this occasion. The whole air and attitude of the king were cold and repelling, and although none were indiscreet enough to approach the recess, still the name of Lautrec, frequently and bitterly repeated by the king, and the tears which stood in the eyes of the countess, sufficed to convince those who overheard a passing word, or looked for an instant towards their retreat, that the vexation of spirit by which the young monarch was oppressed had induced him to utter some allusion to the disastrous war in

Italy, which he was about to make an effort to redeem.

Françoise de Foix was still the perfection of loveliness, but she had already become aware that she was rapidly losing her power over the volatile monarch whom her charms had hitherto enslaved ; and as she stood beside him on that sunny morning, and saw that her smile had no longer power to dispel the shadow which had gathered upon his countenance, she felt her spirit sicken, although her courage did not fail.

"Nay, Sire," she said gently, raising her large blue eyes appealingly to his, as the king paused after an outbreak of indignant anger ; "surely you are too harsh. Consider the difficulties with which he had to contend, the privations which he was called upon to suffer. You know his zeal, his loyalty, and his devotion ; do not, I beseech you, attribute to him the reverses which would with more justice be visited elsewhere."

"You talk glibly, madame," was the stern reply, "and I have, perhaps, given you license to do so by countenancing the madness of a man to whom, at your entreaty, I gave the government of the Milanese—a weakness which has cost me the friendship of the Duc de Bourbon, the most powerful of my subjects—a man who has requited me by the loss of the duchy which was entrusted to him."

"But who would have saved it, sire, and even augmented its importance," said the countess with that bold eloquence which women can always com-

mand in defence of those who are dear to them, "if the promised supplies had not been intercepted."

"Enough, madame, enough," said the king as he turned away, "the real criminal is yet to be detected ; neither you nor I can decide where the blame may lie. Let it suffice that it is not too late to punish the guilty."

Madame de Châteaubriand had presumed too much upon her favour. A single year back, and she might have hazarded such an allusion, but now she saw her error. Only when blinded by passion can the great brook or forgive any insinuation against their peers, and Francis had passed this point with the fair accuser of his mother. Conscious also that he could not maintain his position, he was irritated by a pertinacity which compelled him to stand on the defensive ; and being unaccustomed to conceal his feelings, his contracted brow and flashing eye betrayed to the fair favourite the whole extent of her imprudence.

Trembling and terrified, the countess in her turn averted her face and endeavoured to conceal the tears which were rolling over her blanched cheeks ; while Francis, either unconscious or careless of the emotion he had excited, leaned listlessly over the balcony and affected to gaze out upon the chase beyond.

The entrance of Madame d'Alençon aroused the king from his reverie, and when she had paid her respects to the queen he beckoned her to his side. "You have arrived at a fortunate moment, Mar

guerite," he said, making an effort to throw off the gloom by which he was oppressed ; " I am weary of waiting, and have been amusing myself by a project which will, I think, delight you."

" And yet neither you nor Madame de Châteaubriand appeared to me to be particularly joyous when I glanced towards you," said the duchess playfully ; " but what is this charming project ?"

" I will, should my life be spared, pull down this gloomy fortress, which is a blot upon so fair a landscape, and erect a palace better suited to the loves and graces than a mass of old gray towers and battlemented walls. We want gardens, too, and we will have them of regal dimensions ; while, instead of the insignificant stream which now disfigures the domain, we will turn the waters of the Loire, and compel them to lend their aid in its embellishment."

" The design is indeed magnificent !" exclaimed Marguerite, " and it will be glorious to celebrate in the new palace the recovery of the Milanese."

" Which is the more probable, *mignonne*, as I shall on this occasion undertake it myself," said Francis, " and I trust that for the future I may be able to hold what I have gained."

The duchess, struck by the remark, glanced towards the favourite, and at once became convinced that she was not unconnected with the evident irritation of the king. The nature of her education had rendered her very indulgent to the errors of her sex, and conscious that the disgrace of Françoise de

Foix would only involve a new and perhaps a more dangerous *liaison*, she hastened to avert the impending storm by sundry flattering comments upon the costume and beauty of the countess.

"Madame de Châteaubriand has to-day excelled herself," she said admiringly, as she swept aside the clustering feathers of her riding-hat and passed her fingers caressingly through one of the long fair ringlets which they overshadowed, "she will be the very Dian of the woods!"

"Madame de Châteaubriand is always charming," said the king, still gazing through the open window; "but we shall do well to pay our parting compliments to the queen at once in order that no further time may be lost when the hunt is ready." And as he spoke he offered his hand to his sister, and led her to the upper end of the hall.

Françoise de Foix followed them with a glance which betrayed all the agony of her spirit, and then, feeling that she could no longer conceal their agitation, rapidly withdrew through a side door.

She had scarcely left the recess when the Comte de St. Vallier approached the window, and folding his arms upon the balcony, leaned out, apparently buried in deep and painful thought: he was not, however, long suffered to indulge his reverie, for ere many moments had elapsed a noble, not attired in the fanciful costume of the hunt but in a close travelling dress, placed himself at his side, and whispered anxiously, "My time grows short—on what have you determined?"

"I will share his fortunes, be they what they may," said the captain of the king's archers.

"I expected no less. No friend of the duke would desert him at such a moment, far less one whom he loves as he does M. de St. Vallier."

"Are you about to return at once?"

"Instantly; you have pledged your word and my mission is accomplished."

"M. de Pompérant," said the king as he crossed the hall, "you have adopted a strange costume for the forest. Do you not hunt the stag with us this morning?"

"Your majesty does me honour," replied the companion of St. Vallier, bowing respectfully, "but I trust that I may be excused, having last night received a letter from M. de Bourbon, in which he urges me to return to him without delay."

A frown gathered upon the brow of Francis. "I am aware, sir," he said coldly, "that you belong to the household of the connétable, and that you owe him all fitting obedience; yet if I, alike his sovereign and yours, condescend to invite you to remain at Chambord, how then?"

"Then, Sire," replied the noble, bowing still more profoundly, "I shall be compelled to delay my departure for Chantelle."

"How, sir!" exclaimed Francis sharply, "do I understand you? Has M. de Bourbon left Moulins to shut himself up in a fortress?"

"Sire, Chantelle is also a seigneurial residence."

"So I have heard," pursued the king with a

withering frown, "and doubtless as magnificent as it is secure. M. de Bourbon is an able tactician."

"The duke is sick both in body and mind, Sire."

"He travels promptly for an invalid," was the sarcastic reply; "only a few days back he declared himself to be upon his deathbed, and now I learn that he has performed a journey. He may recover his mental sufferings as readily as his bodily ailments, sir, if such be his will; for I myself condescended to be the physician of his mind, and to pledge my royal word that, by virtue of my sovereign authority and on the honour of a gentleman, his sequestered estates should be restored to him. Consequently he can need no better cure. But we are summoned to the chase; and now, sir, I leave it to your own discretion to choose between us. You may join our sport or retire as you think best."

As he ceased speaking Francis bowed to the queen, who rose as he withdrew, and strode from the hall attended by the courtly crowd which was to accompany him to the forest. M. de Pompérant shortly followed; but availing himself of the equivocal permission he had received, he mounted his horse in the inner court, and as the glittering party made their way towards Bussy hastened in the direction of Chantelle with all the speed of his good steed.

This little outbreak of temper had apparently restored Francis to equanimity, for he not only reined up his horse beside that of Madame de Châteaubriand, but even exerted himself to dispel

the effects of his late coldness, an attempt which was ere long successful ; while the Duchesse d'Alençon, who was passionately attached to the chase, galloped hither and thither over the green sward until she contrived without observation to detach herself from the group immediately about the king.

" Ride on, ladies, ride on ! " she said gaily to some of her suite who were endeavouring to follow her erratic course, " the soul of the greenwood is freedom from constraint ; " and then as she saw them successively obey she beckoned to her side the venerable Comte de St. Vallier, whom she affected to address in a loud voice.

" M. de Poitiers," she said, " you are strangely churlish for a courtier. You know how long we have all been anxious to welcome your fair daughter, Madame la Grande Sénéchale, to Amboise, and yet you do not summon her from her retreat in Normandy. How is this ? "

" Diane is young and beautiful, madame, while M. de Brézé is very old, very ugly, and but newly married."

" An admirable reason," laughed the duchess, as she shook back her streaming hair and reined in her impatient palfrey, " while his sovereign is very young, very handsome, and—am I right, M. le Comte ? "

St. Vallier bowed in silence.

" A truce, however, to this idle discourse," said Madame d'Alençon suddenly, after a rapid glance about her. " You are ill at ease, M. de Poitiers."

"I, madame!" exclaimed the count anxiously, "why should I be so? How *could* I be so in your presence?"

"Disentangle the bridle of my horse," said Marguerite de Valois, and as St. Vallier bent forward to obey, she murmured in his ear, "You are the old and tried friend of M. de Bourbon."

"He has few older, madame, and none more sincere."

"You are also in his confidence——"

"Such an admission at such a moment might be perilous, madame."

"Not when made to me," persisted the duchess; "you are aware that I also have a great regard for the connétable; and I confess to you that I am anxious on his account. And yet, even angered as he may be by recent events, I will not believe that the suspicion which now attaches to him can be justified. Bourbon is so great even in his failings, that although he may be quick to resent an injury, I am convinced that he would nevertheless be slow to revenge it."

"The duke is as just as he is generous, madame," stammered St. Vallier, at a loss how to reply.

"Oh yes; he is incapable of treason; I know it, I feel it!" exclaimed Marguerite enthusiastically. "But whom have we here?"

The person who had attracted the attention of the princess was a courier, who was scouring across the plain at the utmost speed of his horse, and approaching the royal party. As he halted, he de-

livered into the hands of Bonnivet a sealed packet which was immediately given to the king. The first emotion of Francis was one of impatience at this new intrusion upon his pleasures, but as he read the contents of the paper a frown gathered on his brow, and his lip blenched. He bent forward at its conclusion, and said a few words in a low tone to Bonnivet, who immediately wheeled his horse to the side of St. Vallier, and said audibly, "Sir, deliver up your sword; I claim it in the name of the king."

For a moment Jean de Poitiers hesitated, but instantly recovering himself, he withdrew his hat with one hand and with the other presented the weapon, without uttering a syllable.

"Brother, I beseech you, what means this?" asked the duchess, who had suddenly become as pale as death.

"Treason, madame," said Francis coldly, as he again moved forward; while Bonnivet, with an escort of armed men, in the midst of whom he placed his prisoner, retraced his steps to Chambord.

Before the return of the hunting party the captain of the king's archers had been conveyed to the dungeons of Loches.

The despatch thus inopportunately received had been forwarded by the Maréchal de Lautrec, who had obtained proofs of the intended treachery of Bourbon and the complicity of St. Vallier, and who had hastened to apprise the king of the circumstance. The indignation of Francis was extreme, and as he pursued his way he expatiated bitterly to

.

M. de Savoie, the Marquis de Chabannes, the Duc de Guise, and M. de Montmorency, who rode beside him, upon the deception which had been practised on him by the duke. "My frankness and plain dealing," he said angrily, "should have produced more effect; but since he has seen fit to turn traitor, he must abide his fate."

An expedition was immediately despatched against the attainted duke, under the command of M. de Savoie and Chabannes; but he had, meanwhile, entrusted to the Bishop of Autun a letter to the king, in which he offered to return to his allegiance on condition that all his forfeited estates should be restored to him, and that none of his friends should suffer for their adherence to his interests. This appeal was, in fact, an open avowal of his contemplated rebellion; and the king's troops, having encountered the prelate near Lyons, at once seized his person, and forwarded all his papers to Francis, whose utmost indignation was excited no less by the contents than by the tone of the letter, in which Bourbon proposed terms to him rather with the authority of an equal than the deference of a subject.

Information was, however, conveyed to Chantelle by one of Bourbon's agents of the approach of the royal troops, when the duke saw that he had not a moment to lose unless he would incur the risk of being besieged in his fortress, a hazard of which the result was scarcely doubtful; and he, consequently, took instant measures to effect his retreat.

Assuming the livery of M. de Pompérant, and acting as his valet, he left Chantelle without any other attendant, while Montagnac Tauzannes, another of his devoted adherents, put on his own dress, and, mounting his favourite hack, pursued a contrary route, with three or four followers, in order to deceive the emissaries of the king. Having thus ridden throughout the night without a suspicion on the part of those by whom he was accompanied, that they were not actually escorting their master, Tauzannes found himself compelled, when the day dawned, to dismiss them, after having explained his purpose, and thanked them for the sympathy which they expressed for the misfortunes of their chief; and while silently and sorrowfully they retraced their steps he pursued his way alone, and proceeded by bye-roads to the Bourbonnais, where he concealed himself, shaved off his hair and his beard, and, disguising himself as a priest, once more set forth to join the fugitive connétable.

The determination of the duke and his companion was, if possible, to gain Franche Comté; and as it was necessary to adopt every available method of baffling their pursuers, they caused the shoes of their horses to be reversed, and made their way directly towards the frontier. After innumerable dangers, and more than one narrow escape from detection, they reached Auvergne, and thence proceeded by Le Forez and Dauphiny to Savoy, intending to take the post at Chambéry for Italy. This plan proved, however, impracticable, the troops

under the Comte de St. Pol having crossed the Alps and occupied the passes; and they were consequently compelled to retrace their steps and to take refuge at St. Claude, where they were joined by about sixty gentlemen devoted to the interests of the connétable, who had, like himself, succeeded in making their escape. With their assistance he was enabled to raise a small body of horsemen; and thus accompanied he effected his retreat two months subsequently through Germany to Mantua, where he took up his abode with the marquis, who was his kinsman.

Many of his adherents had been less fortunate. Jean de Poitiers was still a prisoner at Loches, and the Bishop of Autun at Lyons, and Aymard de Prie, François Descars, Seigneur de la Vanguyon, who had married Isabelle de Bourbon-Carency, a relative of the duke; Bertrand Brion, Pierre de Popillon, chancellor of the Bourbonnais; the Comte de St. Bonnet, Gilbert Baudemanche, and the Bishop of Puy, were arrested and put upon their trial as traitors.

This formidable conspiracy created a consternation throughout the whole kingdom, which was heightened by an invasion on the frontiers of Picardy and Champagne, and the advance of the English and Flemish armies to within eleven leagues of Paris. The Duc de Vendôme, who, despite his relationship with the connétable, had continued faithful to the king, and the Marquis de la Tremouille, with whom he acted in concert, succeeded,

however, in beating back the imperialists ; but Francis, finding himself surrounded by peril at home, was reluctantly compelled to abandon for a time his intention of passing into Italy, and was induced to confide the command of that army to Bonnivet.

The next measure of the king was the confiscation of the whole of the estates of the attainted duke, whose adherents were brought to trial before commissioners specially delegated for that purpose ; but as their disclosures involved many other individuals, and the affair became every day more complicated, it was ultimately referred to the parliament of Paris. It soon became apparent that the judges placed no faith in the reality of the plot as it had been originally represented to them, but regarded Bourbon as the victim of the duchess-mother, and were inclined to screen the criminals from this conviction ; in which they were strengthened by the idle exaggerations of Brian Chabot, who had been sent to the capital by the king immediately after the flight of the connétable with intelligence of the conspiracy, and who, not satisfied with detailing plain facts, declared that proof had been obtained that its object had been to deliver up Francis to the King of England, to "make mince-meat" of the children of France, to imprison the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and to exterminate every branch of the reigning family. The common sense of the parliament revolted at so improbable a tale ; they were aware that Bourbon had many wrongs to avenge, but they

remembered that he was a brave man and not an assassin ; and thus the ill-judged eloquence of the favourite made them suspicious, and it was with a decided bias in favour of the accused that they proceeded to the trial.

The Bishop of Puy was unhesitatingly acquitted ; for it was shown that although he, as well as the Bishop of Autun, was attached to the household of the duke, they were inveterate enemies who never could have been induced to act in common, and that their jealousies and quarrels had occasionally called for the interference of Bourbon himself. Gilbert de Baudemanche, who was accused of having raised troops in the name of the connétable, brought witnesses to prove that the said troops had been levied for the service of the king. St. Bonnet was also released after a brief examination, during which nothing tended to implicate him ; to others were awarded an imprisonment of longer or shorter duration ; nineteen who had effected their escape were condemned to death for contumacy ; and the only rigorous sentences pronounced against any of the accused were those upon the Comte de St. Vallier and M. de Vauguyon, the first of whom was found guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and condemned to degradation, torture, and ultimately death upon the scaffold, and the latter to the application of "the question," upon the presumption that, being allied to the duke, he must be better informed upon the subject and extent of the conspiracy than his associates. His vehement entreaty, however, that he might lose his

head at once, and be spared the agony of undergoing sufferings which, from his utter ignorance of the whole affair, could lead to no result, induced his judges to grant such a delay as enabled his family to intercede in his behalf, and he was ultimately banished to Orleans for two years, and then obtained a free pardon. The Bishop of Autun was also imprisoned for a time, and after the death of Bourbon reinstated not only in the king's grace but also in his possessions ; and thus the venerable Jean de Poitiers, who, of all his friends, had laboured the most assiduously to dissuade the duke from his rebellion, was the only one of his adherents who was left for execution.

It is asserted that Francis either was, or affected to be, highly displeased at the leniency of the judges toward a crime which not only involved the safety of the country, but even the liberty of the sovereign ; declaring that every one of the conspirators richly deserved death, and that he was at a loss to imagine upon what pretext their impunity could be justified. He moreover appointed new commissioners, and once more the whole of the suspected persons were put upon their trial. It would appear, however, that this extraordinary pertinacity upon his part merely served to strengthen the original impression that the hatred of Madame d'Angoulême against the connétable was the real motive of such severity ; and, accordingly, the verdict of the second Court only tended to ratify that of its predecessor ; an obstinacy on the part of the parliament which drew forth a

threatening letter from the king, in which he asserted that since they were determined to persist in their error, and to prefer their own pleasure to the duty which they owed alike to himself and to the nation, he would take such steps as should render them an example to others.

In all probability, however, he became convinced that by this display of temper he had been led into a great and dangerous error ; it is at least certain that the letter had no results.

We have already stated that the daughter of St. Vallier had, in her thirteenth year, been given in marriage to Louis de Brézé, Comte de Maulevrier, Grand Seneschal of Normandy. The marriage took place in the year 1514, when the bridegroom had already attained the age of fifty-five, and bore about him many honourable scars, which, however they might tend to enhance his glory as a soldier, were by no means calculated to increase his personal attractions in the eyes of a young and beautiful woman. Unfortunately, moreover, Louis de Brézé was perfectly aware of the discrepancies which existed between himself and his bride ; but, enslaved by her extraordinary attractions, he had wilfully closed his eyes against the excess of his imprudence, until the fearful jealousy of which he became the victim so soon as he had made Diane his wife exposed to him the whole extent of his error.

Nor was the home to which he conveyed the newly-made countess more consistent with her age and habits than its master. The gloomy castle of

Anet (pompously designated the palace of the kings of Navarre, because the domain had originally formed a portion of the territories appertaining to those sovereigns), admirably as it was situated in a fertile valley, watered by the rival rivers of the Eure and the Vesgre, and backed by the magnificent forest of Dreux, was in itself dark, melancholy, and isolated. It consisted of a heavy square mass of masonry, pierced on each of its sides by two rows of lancet windows, deeply sunk in the stonework, and was flanked at either corner by strong and lofty towers, the whole of the edifice being surrounded by a battlemented wall and encircled by a moat, and the only mode of access being through the medium of a drawbridge, which communicated with a single entrance gate, opening upon the court within. The interior of Anet was consistent with its outward appearance; dark oaken panellings, grim time-touched portraits of departed worthies, long and chill galleries where the lightest footfall awoke mysterious echoes,—these were the unattractive features of the bridal-house of the mere girl whom the grand seneschal had won from her smiling birth-place in Dauphiny.

Diane, who was destined hereafter to play so prominent a part during two successive reigns, was, as we have said, the daughter of the Comte de St. Valier, the representative of one of the most ancient families of Dauphiny, and of Jeanne de Batarnay, and was born on the 3d of September 1499; while her husband, Louis de Brézé, was the grandson on the

mother's side of Charles VII. and Agnes Sorel—a circumstance which at that period was considered greatly to enhance his personal dignity, whatever prejudice might be attached to it in our own times. At the period of her father's condemnation Diane had consequently passed her twenty-third year, but she had spent her early life in an unbroken calm which still invested her with all the charms of youth and ingenuousness. Looking upon the Comte de Maulevrier rather with the respect of a child than the fondness of a wife, she had soon accustomed herself to the gloomy etiquette by which she was surrounded; and knowing nothing of a world of which she was one day to become the idol, she passed her time among her maids, her flowers, and her birds without one repining thought.

Diane possessed all the graces that attract, and all the charms which enslave. Nature had endowed her alike with beauty and with intellect; and as she moved through the sombre saloons of Anet like a spirit of light, the gloomy seneschal blessed the day upon which he had secured such a vision of loveliness to gladden his monotonous existence.

It may therefore be supposed with what bitter and self-upbraiding reflections he discovered that his betrayal to the king of the treachery of the Duc de Bourbon had involved the life of his father-in-law. Fain would he have concealed such a secret from Diane, but her filial affection rendered the attempt impossible; and little aware of the firm nature of the woman who had hitherto made his

will her law, he was astonished to find that, when her first passionate burst of grief had subsided, so far from abandoning herself to a vain and idle sorrow, she wiped away her tears, and declared that his unfortunate revelation must be immediately repaired, and the life of her father saved. In vain did De Brézé represent to her that he had been condemned by the parliament, and that all hope was consequently over. Diane was not to be convinced.

"Tell me not," she said vehemently, "that there is no remedy. Do you remember, sir, that should no intercession be made, not only will my father suffer a painful death, but that disgrace will evermore attach itself to the name of our family? He must be saved."

Louis de Brézé shook his head mournfully.

"You would dissuade me in vain!" she persisted; "he must and he shall be saved."

"But how?"

"I will save him."

"You, madame! You are not even known at Court."

"What care I for that? My misfortunes will at once enable me to take my fitting place. I will throw myself at the feet of the king. He cannot refuse to listen to a child pleading for the life of her father."

"And meanwhile, Diane," cried the seneschal in a voice of agony, "what will become of *me*!"

"You must pray, sir: pray that the miserable effects of your mistaken loyalty may be counter-

acted; pray that the efforts of your wretched wife may be crowned with success. I will not delay a day—not an hour. A head may fall in an instant.”

Louis de Brézé was overcome by the energy which she displayed. Hitherto she had been gentle and compliant, but he suddenly found himself overawed by the power of her will as by something new and strange; and although gloomy forebodings, to which he dared not lend a definite form, arose before him, he suffered her to hasten the preparations for her departure without one effort to impede her purpose.

When the moment came, however, in which she was to leave Anet, the young wife found to her astonishment that she was to set forth alone upon her melancholy mission. “I cannot meet your father,” was the only reason which the count could assign for this singular supineness. “Be speedy in your return, Diane, for you know that the better part of my existence goes with you.”

No time was lost upon the road, yet when Madame de Brézé reached the city the scaffold was already erected upon which her father was to suffer. Unaware, however, of this ghastly fact, she at once sought an audience of the king, who was informed, while surrounded by a bevy of his nobles, among whom he was endeavouring to forget the impending tragedy, that a lady solicited permission to enter his presence.

“Who is she?” he inquired with some curiosity of the usher on duty; “whence does she come?”

"It is the Grande Sénéchale of Normandy, Sire ; and she has come post from Anet."

"Ah, on the faith of a gentleman!" exclaimed Francis, "she has chosen an unhappy moment to present herself at Court. This is the far-famed beauty, Diane de Poitiers, my lords, of whom we have all heard so much, and whom none of us have seen, as I believe, since her childhood. She has come on a woful errand truly, for it is easy to guess the purport of her visit. Admit her instantly."

"The lady is anxious to be permitted to see your majesty alone," said the usher respectfully.

The monarch glanced rapidly about him with a slight inclination of the head, and in a moment the apartment was cleared ; while, as the retreating steps of the courtiers were heard in the gallery, a door fell back, and, closely veiled, and enveloped in a heavy mantle, Diane rushed into the saloon and threw herself at the feet of the king, crying breathlessly, "Mercy ! mercy !"

"Rise, madame," said Francis, as the suppliant would have clasped his knees ; "remember that you are the wife of a loyal subject, and that your father is very guilty."

"He is old, Sire ; he has grown old in the service of his sovereign ;" and as she spoke she raised her drooping head, from which the hood fell back, thus revealing all the beauty of her pale and agonized countenance. "You will not, you cannot, allow the memory of a long life of fidelity to be obliterated by one fault. Oh ! if you knew how strenuously he

exhorted M. de Bourbon not to persist in his error ; if you could have seen the brave old man, tortured by premature remorse for his defection from his king, and yet shrinking from the accusation that he could abandon his nearest and dearest friend at the moment of peril—you, Sire—you who know so well how to appreciate all that is great and noble—you would have held him absolved."

"You are an eloquent advocate, madame."

"I am not only pleading for my father, Sire, but for myself ; for my own honour and for the peace of mind of my husband ; for surely you cannot have forgotten that the grand seneschal, by revealing the designs of the connétable, involved the safety of him for whom I sue, and that, should he perish, M. de Brézé will have been his murderer !"

"I pity you, madame, from my very heart," said Francis, as he lifted her from the ground, and placed her upon a seat.

"Do more, Sire !" exclaimed Diane, rising and standing erect, her beautiful figure relieved by the sombre drapery which she had flung aside in the effort. "You are a great and powerful sovereign. Do more. Forget that Jean de Poitiers was the friend of Charles de Bourbon, and remember only that he was the zealous and loyal subject of Francis I. The most noble, the most holy of all royal prerogatives is mercy."

"Madame——"

"Ah, you relent ! My father is saved !" exclaimed the grande sénéchale. "I knew it—I felt

it—you could not see those venerable gray hairs soiled by the hands of the executioner.”

What more passed during this memorable interview is not even matter of history. The writers of the time put different interpretations upon the clemency of the king. Suffice it that the Comte de St. Vallier was reprieved upon the very scaffold, and that Madame de Brézé remained at Court, where she became the inspiring spirit of the muse of Clement Marot, who has succeeded, by the various poems which he wrote in her honour, and of which the sense is far from equivocal, in creating a suspicion that she was not long ere she became reconciled not only to the manners but also to the vices of the licentious Court, in which, later, she made herself so unfortunately conspicuous. Some historians acquit her of having paid by the forfeiture of her innocence for the life of her father, from the fact that in the patent by which his sentence was remitted no mention is made of her personal intercession, and that his pardon was attributed to that of the grand seneschal himself, and others of his relatives and friends; but it appears scarcely probable that Francis would, under any circumstances, have been guilty of the indelicacy of involving her name in public disgrace—aware, as he necessarily must have been, of the suspicion which was attached to every young and beautiful woman to whom he accorded any marked favour or protection.

Had her after life, moreover, been pure and exemplary, and had she, after obtaining the pardon of her

father, withdrawn once more into retirement, posterity would have been at no loss to form a correct and worthy judgment of her conduct. Diane de Poitiers, pleading at the feet of the king for the life of a parent, succeeding in her sublime mission, and subsequently dedicating her youth to the solace of that parent's sufferings, would have ranked among the noblest examples of female virtue and heroism ; but Diane de Poitiers, the frivolous votary of courtly pleasures, and the mature mistress of a boy-prince, excites only disgust, distrust, and contempt ; and as we trace her downward course step by step, we scarcely care to ascertain by whom she was first led into the path of evil.

CHAPTER V

1523-24

Mortifications of Bourbon—Francis endeavours to restore him to his allegiance—Bourbon rejects his overtures—His estates are sequestered—Bad faith of Charles V.—Jealousy of the imperialist generals—France attacked on all sides—The Duc de Vendôme recalled for the defence of Paris—Brion Chabot despatched to the capital to reassure the citizens—A second gasconnade—The retort courteous—The English troops withdraw from France—Discontent of the nation at the appointment of Bonnivet—Contrast between Bourbon and Bonnivet as generals—Gallant defence of Cremona by M. d'Herbouville—Death of the Pope—Pescara driven back to Milan—Bonnivet blockades the city—Able defence of Colonna—Bayard detached to Vigevano—Bonnivet raises the siege—Death of Colonna—De Lannoy and Pescara enter Milan—Accession of Clement VII.—Bonnivet applies for reinforcements—Bonnivet besieges Arona, but is repulsed—Bayard defends Rebec, is attacked by Pescara, and compelled to fly—Indignation of Bayard against Bonnivet—Bourbon declines to come to an engagement with Bonnivet—Retreat of the French army—Bonnivet is wounded—Bayard and Vandenesse assume the command of the troops—Vandenesse and Bayard mortally wounded—The last moments of the good knight—Grief of the soldiery—Homage to heroism—A dying rebuke—Death of Bayard—His funeral *cortège*—Regretful exclamation of Francis—A soldier's monument.

WHILE the friends of Bourbon were thus suffering the penalties of their adherence to his cause, the duke himself was scarcely more fortunate. He had already experienced with bitterness that he was no longer the powerful noble before whom all save royalty bowed down, the idol of the devoted soldiery, and the object of universal popularity. Nothing was left to him but his great name and the weapon which he had never yet wielded save in

the cause of his country, but which was now to be unsheathed against her ; and it is probable that the very excess of his despair rendered him desperate ; for Francis, urged, as it is asserted, by his mother, who discovered too late the fatal mistake of which she had been the author, was induced at this period to make a last effort to restore him to his allegiance, and for this purpose commissioned a gentleman of his household to offer to him a free pardon, and the restitution of all his estates and pensions, if he would forthwith acknowledge his error and return to France.

When he received the royal envoy, Bourbon was surrounded by such of his adherents as had succeeded in effecting their escape ; and as he glanced about him, and remembered that for his sake they had been proscribed and condemned, all his original indignation was aroused.

"It is too late, sir," he said haughtily ; "the king your master had probably forgotten that others have been involved in my misfortune. Do you bring me an assurance of equal impunity for all my gallant friends ?"

"I am authorized simply to treat with yourself, my lord duke," was the reply.

"In that case our interview need not be prolonged," said Bourbon ; "neither they nor I ask for any favour at the hands of Francis of France. I will not detain you from more urgent duties."

"You are resolved, monseigneur ?"

"You have my answer, sir."

"I am then compelled to complete my mission, M. de Bourbon, by demanding, in the name of my sovereign, the sword which you bore as Connétable of France, and the collar of St. Michael with which you were invested."

The duke smiled bitterly. "That sword," he said, "I cannot deliver to you. It was taken from me at the passage of the Scheldt, and transferred to the brother-in-law of the king; at his hands therefore you must seek it. The collar of St. Michael must be already in the possession of the sovereign, since I learn that Chantelle has been garrisoned by his troops, and the property found there confiscated to his use. I left it suspended at the head of my bed, and doubtless it was found there."

"And this, monseigneur, is your final answer?"

The connétable bowed in silence, and the royal envoy withdrew.

The total sequestration of Bourbon's estates to the Crown followed swiftly upon this ill-omened interview; he was declared guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and degraded from all his offices and dignities, thus becoming a proscribed and penniless outlaw; while he was made conscious, by the coldness of his new master, of the change which had been effected by this reverse of fortune upon the selfish monarch through whose insidious counsel he had been betrayed.

Charles had believed that by securing Bourbon he should induce a great portion of France to rise against its sovereign, but no such result ensued;

and mortified by the disappointment, he forgot the value of the individual in his annoyance at the failure of his hopes. Instead of reiterating the promise which he had made of conferring the hand of his sister upon the duke, and of assisting him to regain his sequestrated estates, he even suffered a considerable time to elapse before he replied to his application for employment ; and when he at length found it expedient to do so, he contented himself by leaving it at his discretion either to return to Spain or to assume the command of the imperial army in Italy as lieutenant-general ; while, situated as he was at the moment, Bourbon was fain to accept the latter alternative.

The defection of the *connétable* had meanwhile paralysed the strength of the French army. Suspicions arose among the soldiery that the evil would not end where it had begun. A rallying point was lost, and there was no longer that unity among the troops which had tended to render them so formidable to their enemies. Nevertheless, by a singular coincidence, the same absence of a settled or rather simultaneous purpose proved the salvation of France ; for, had the several attacks which the king was called upon to repel been directed at one and the same moment against him, there can be little doubt that he must have sunk under so unequal a conflict. Such, however, was far from being the case ; the jealousy that existed between the rival generals, and especially that which Pescara bore to Bourbon, rendered all sincere co-operation impossible ; and thus

Spain, Germany, and England acted independently, and by this defective policy afforded breathing time to Francis. The Germans were repulsed from Franche-Comté by the Duc de Guise; Lautrec defended Bayonne against the Spaniards during four days, and compelled them to raise the siege, when they fell back upon Fontarabia, which, as we have elsewhere stated, was delivered to them by Captain Franget—a success which did not, however, encourage them to pursue their advantage.

The progress of the English army we have already recorded, and the alarm excited by the approach to the capital was so great that it overcame the mistrust of Francis towards the Duc de Vendôme, whom, as a kinsman of the connétable, he had hitherto feared to invest with an authority which might enable him to assist the fugitive in his supposed designs against Paris. The Duke of Norfolk, at the head of fifteen thousand men, had been joined at Calais by the Comte de Beaurein, and their combined strength amounted to between six and seven thousand horse, a strong body of artillery, and nearly thirty thousand foot; while La Tremouille, who was called upon to oppose them, could scarcely muster a sufficient force to garrison his fortresses. The month of September had, however, commenced; and he calculated upon the rainy season which was rapidly approaching, the difficulty which the invading armies must necessarily experience in victualling their troops, and above all on the well-tried valour

of his superior officers. Nevertheless his force was so insufficient for such an emergency that, according to Du Bellay, he was compelled whenever the enemy withdrew from before a fortified place to remove the garrison into another which was liable to attack.

Under these circumstances Francis recalled the Duc de Vendôme from his government of Champagne to the defence of Paris, at the head of four hundred men-at-arms; and at the same time despatched Brion Chabot to assure the citizens that assistance was at hand. The embassy was precisely one which flattered the vanity of the young count, who, strong in his consciousness of the royal favour, although naturally brave, was arrogant, thoughtless, and self-sufficient; and he had no sooner called a meeting than, omitting altogether to mention the immediate arrival of Vendôme with his troops, he made a flowery harangue, in which he bade the inhabitants of the metropolis divest themselves of all uneasiness, as the king had taken every precaution to ensure the safety of the city, and had sent him to defend it.

Baillet, a shrewd and practical man, who was second president of the parliament, when the young courtier, flushed with his own eloquence, paused for a reply, calmly rose, and, glancing about him with a look of grave irony, answered by assuring the royal envoy that he was welcome to the capital as the messenger of their sovereign lord the king, and that there could be little doubt that, should need be, he

would demean himself in a manner worthy of his mission ; but that, nevertheless, none of his co-citizens could have forgotten that when Louis XI. was anxious to convince his good city of Paris that the invasion of Charles of Burgundy should not affect their safety, he had not sent a solitary courier by post, but a French marshal with four hundred armed men—a better security than himself, whatever might be his personal qualities or his court favour, for the preservation of a metropolis ; and that, consequently, he felt it incumbent on him to congratulate his fellow-townsmen upon the fact that M. de Vendôme, with a body of troops, was already on the road to reinforce M. de Brion Chabot.

This intelligence soon reached the enemy's camp also ; and the English duke, apprehensive that he might be enclosed between the armies of Tremouille and Vendôme, determined on retiring to Calais, the Germans and Flemings having already insisted upon a retreat. He accordingly withdrew by Nesle, Ham, and Bohain, and ultimately sailed for England in the month of December, with a mere skeleton of the fine army which he had led into France, having effected nothing.

We have already stated that the conspiracy of Bourbon had induced Francis to forego his intention of heading his troops in the Milanese, and that he had temporarily confided the command to Bonni-vet, who, rash, inconsiderate, and comparatively inexperienced, had only his reckless courage to recommend him. This ill-fated selection had been

made at the suggestion of Madame d'Angoulême, and was intended as the last indignity which she could show to Bourbon, who, considering the favourite as his vassal, would necessarily feel himself outraged by such an arrangement, when France could have opposed him by a Vendôme, a Chabannes, or a Montmorency.

Its effect was, however, to the full as unfavourable upon the nation at large; the French people, and above all, the French army, had no confidence in the light-hearted and libertine favourite of the duchess-mother; and public opinion seldom errs. His agency had been traced throughout the disgrace of the connétable, not only the first noble, but also the first soldier of France; and while a hope was entertained that the duke, after the bitter paroxysm of his indignation had passed over, might still become reconciled to his sovereign, the more wary of those who watched the progress of events felt a melancholy conviction that should it be otherwise, and Bourbon be indeed induced to bear arms against his country, the contest would be fearfully unequal. Bonnivet had merely the uncalculating courage of a soldier, while Bourbon possessed the tried prudence of a commander; the spoiled favourite was presumptuous, disdaining all advice from those about him, whatever might be the amount of their experience; while the attainted duke sought, on the contrary, for counsel, calculated every chance, was an adept in the whole science of warfare, and was ever ready to profit by any oversight on the part of his

adversary. But Bourbon, proscribed and despoiled, now possessed only his proud name and his good sword; while Bonnivet, at the very moment when his sovereign contented himself by sending a prince of the blood at the head of four hundred men to protect the capital of his kingdom, found himself invested with the command of sixteen hundred lances, the flower of the French cavalry, six thousand Swiss, two thousand troops from the Valais, as many from the Grisons, six thousand lansquenets, three thousand Italians, and twelve thousand French volunteers.

The moment of the invasion, was, however, an unpropitious one for France. The solitary fortress which she still possessed, that of Cremona, was garrisoned only by eight brave men, the remnant of a garrison of forty, to whom, under the command of M. d'Herbouville, it had been entrusted eighteen months previously, and who, although they continued to hold the place, had long despaired of help, and been cut off from all communication with their countrymen; while the Pope had joined the confederation, believing that he should thus ensure the peace of Italy, and had confided the command of his troops to the Duke of Mantua, who was as anxious as himself to avoid a collision with the enemy.

The sudden death of the pontiff, moreover, which took place on the 14th of September, the very day upon which the campaign commenced, rendered the papal general still more averse to an encounter with

the French forces upon his own responsibility. The confederated army was still scattered, while Prosper Colonna, the general-in-chief, who was entrusted with the defence of the Milanese, was a confirmed invalid, and was, moreover, trammelled for want of means to pay his troops. Charles de Lannoy, Viceroy of Naples, who, in the event of Colonna's demise, was to succeed to his command, had halted in the south of Italy in order not to arouse any suspicion of his purpose; and Pescara, whose jealous animosity towards him no personal success of his own had been able to appease, had left the army for Valladolid, where the emperor was then residing, in order to pour out all his complaints against his rival. Nevertheless, despite extreme old age, bodily suffering, and mental anxiety, Colonna was still true to his reputation, and contrived to harass the enemy and to impede their progress by all practicable means. As they advanced, although unable to mount his horse, he caused himself to be conveyed in a litter to the bank of the Ticino opposite Vigevano, in order to dispute their passage; but on his arrival there he found that the extreme drought which had prevailed throughout the summer had so decreased the volume of water that the river could be forded from every point, and he was consequently compelled to make a rapid retreat to Milan.

Had Bonnivet pursued his advantage on the instant there can be little doubt that he might have become master of the city; for thirty years of intermittent warfare had impoverished the citizens, and

the walls of the town were still in ruins, while, as we have already stated, the confederated army was dispersed over a large extent of territory. By the forced march of one day the French general might have reached the city, but, anxious to convince those who had hitherto accused him of rashness that he could exert a prudence equal to their own, he lingered for three days on the shores of the Ticino, and thus gave the imperialist general time to repair his fortifications and to strengthen his garrison.

Bonnivet was accordingly compelled to have recourse to a blockade, and to attempt, by turning the water-courses and breaking up the roads which led to the city, to reduce the fortress by famine—a stratagem which he followed up by taking Monza, Lodi, and Cremona, the latter town having been in the possession of the Duc d'Urbino while the French held the citadel; thus cutting off the supplies, and exposing the beleaguered city to all the horrors of want. By diverting the canals from their course, and destroying the water-mills in the neighbourhood, the French general had taken the most efficient steps to starve out the garrison; but for a time the want of the former was supplied by the springs within the walls, and that of the latter by windmills which Colonna speedily caused to be constructed. And meanwhile the French troops suffered little less in their own camp, the overflowing of the canals, which broke over their dams and flooded the low grounds about them, and the scarcity of forage for the horses and cattle, render-

ing it necessary that they should be perpetually on the alert—a circumstance of which Colonna took advantage, by means of skirmishing parties, to harass and fatigue the troops day and night.

So unremitting, indeed, were his attacks—for he had succeeded in collecting within the walls of Milan no less a force than sixteen hundred horse and fourteen thousand foot—that Bonnivet became apprehensive lest he should, in conjunction with Antonio du Leyva, who held Pavia, take possession of a bridge which he had caused to be constructed at Vigevano for the convenience of conveying provisions into his camp, and thus starve him in his turn; and he accordingly desired Bayard and the Sire de Rence, who were then holding Monza, to take up their quarters in the village of Vigevano in order to defend the bridge—a fatal error, of which he was soon destined to appreciate the extent, as Colonna by recapturing the city of Monza was at once enabled to secure an abundance of all the necessaries of life, and to recruit the failing strength of his garrison.

Under these circumstances Bonnivet soon wearied of a warfare which, perilous and fatiguing as it was, conduced to no result, and which was rendered tenfold more trying to his troops from the extreme rigour of the weather, and the perpetual and severe snowstorms which for the last four months had almost choked up his camp. He consequently proposed a truce, which, however, was declined by Colonna; and thus he found himself obliged, on

the 27th of November, to strike his tents under the very eyes of the enemy. He nevertheless succeeded in effecting his retreat in good order, and in concentrating his troops on an island between the Ticinello and the Ticino, near Biagrasso and Rosat, where he took up his winter quarters, and disbanded a portion of his infantry, which he proposed to replace in the spring by a new levy in Switzerland.

On the 30th of December the brave Colonna breathed his last in Milan, full of years and honour. Although he had already reached the advanced age of eighty, and had long been the victim of a painful and hopeless disease, he had never suffered his spirit to be quenched by the sufferings of his body ; and although both Lannoy and Pescara entered the capital of Lombardy on the very day of his decease, it is questionable whether either, or both combined, could have replaced him.

But, unfortunately for France, private animosity and party feeling had raised up against her a still more formidable enemy ; and the ashes of the brave Colonna were scarcely cold in their sepulchre ere Charles de Bourbon, at the head of six thousand lansquenets whom he had raised in Germany, appeared in the arena. It is true that the coldness of the emperor no longer permitted him to present himself as a prince about to combat for his own interests, and to lend his aid in dismembering the nation, and possessing himself of a separate and independent kingdom ; but still his name was a

watchword of strength, and his influence over the troops so unbounded that the pride of Pescara revolted at a rivalry which he had believed must have terminated with the death of Colonna ; and nothing short of their common desire to revenge their real or imagined wrongs against France could have induced the two generals to fight under the same banner.

The contest before Milan had not, meanwhile, been the only one which engaged the attention of Europe, the death of Pope Adrian the Sixth having necessitated a new election which convulsed the Vatican with cabals and intrigue. The English ambassadors in Rome had been busy in forwarding the interests of Wolsey, who had also applied to the emperor for his support, and looked with confidence to the result. But Charles, even while he pledged himself to the cardinal to uphold his pretensions, had private reasons for desiring his failure, and exerted himself so strenuously to secure it that his name was no sooner mentioned in the conclave than it was unanimously rejected ; and after six weeks of agitation and intrigue between the powerful factions of the cardinals of Medicis and Colonna, the election of the former was secured, and he assumed the popedom under the title of Clement VII. Like his predecessor, the new pontiff secretly favoured the league, and was desirous for the expulsion of the French from Italy, and thus Francis reaped no benefit from the change which had taken place.

Bonnivet, when once he had secured his winter quarters, so far from feeling his confidence diminished by the check which he had experienced under the walls of Milan, cradled himself in the belief that the arrival of adequate reinforcements from France, and the pecuniary pressure to which the enemy were exposed, must tend to his ultimate success so soon as the rigorous season should be terminated ; but he deceived himself.

Francis, once more satisfied of the immediate safety of his kingdom, had no time to spare from his pleasures, and totally overlooked the precarious circumstances of the absent general, while the appearance of Bourbon with the confederated army tended to increase their activity. Moreover, it was essential to Bonnivet that he should maintain a communication with Switzerland and La Valais by means of Lago Maggiore ; and for this purpose he found himself compelled to detach Renzo de Céri, one of the Orsini family, who was a general of the Italian army, with a strong force to besiege Arona, a powerful fortress which defended the passage between Milan and the Simplon on the western side of the lake. His command consisted of seven thousand of his countrymen, but they were for the most part worn-out veterans who had wasted their strength in the intestine wars of Italian independence, and who were now brought together under the same banner without a sympathy in common save that which grew out of the memory that they had each in their turn been indebted for help to the arms of France.

These disjointed troops, nevertheless, held out gallantly during the space of thirty days, and harassed the garrison of the place by their indomitable resolution ; but at the termination of that period they were driven from their post with considerable loss by Anchiso Visconti, who held the citadel, and compelled them to raise the siege.

The great anxiety of Bonnivet, when foiled upon this point, was to prevent the introduction of provisions into Milan ; where he was aware that from the great strength of the garrison, and the multitude of peasantry who had taken refuge within the walls, the consumption must be immense ; and having ascertained that supplies not only of food but also of money were on their way to the city, he resolved to despatch Bayard to a small village called Rebec for the purpose of intercepting them on their passage. The good knight was never backward where hard blows were to be exchanged, but even he hesitated to undertake so hazardous an enterprise, for Rebec was an open hamlet without walls or defences of any description, and was situated within rifle-shot of the enemy's camp.

"It is to you, my lord of Bayard, that I offer this command," said Bonnivet courteously, "because it cannot be in better hands than yours. Take with you two hundred horse, and the infantry of Lorges, and we shall be enabled by these means not only to cut off the supplies of the city but also to obtain unerring intelligence of the movements of the imperialists."

"Both the one measure and the other are desirable, no doubt," was the calm reply of the good knight, "but to effect either I should require the aid of at least a moiety of your whole force. Rebec stands in the midst of the open fields, we have a vigilant enemy to deal with, and our standard will require to be well guarded. Are you prepared to give me the troops I require?"

"Your prudence is ill-timed!" said the arrogant favourite. "Had I not been assured of the perfect safety of the expedition I should not have devised it. Even now not a mouse can stir in Milan but I am instantly apprized of its movements. If you decline, however, there are others——"

"Had my personal honour alone been involved in our failure, monseigneur," broke in Bayard haughtily, "I should have spared both you and myself so many words; but I fight for France, and her glory is dearer to me than my own. I will, however, since such is your good pleasure, march to Rebec at dawn."

"Do so," replied Bonnivet, "and within eight and forty hours I will provide you with such a reinforcement as shall form a living citadel in your new government."

"I shall look for it, my lord," said Bayard coldly, "and will instantly make my preparations."

Accordingly, just as the day broke, the good knight, with a cheerful countenance but a foreboding heart, left Biagrasso at the head of two hundred

horsemen and two thousand foot soldiers ; but so certainly did he foresee the result of such an improvident enterprise that he took with him only a second charger, leaving his mules and his baggage at Novara. His first care on arriving in his new quarters was to defend the village in so far as it was susceptible of defence, but when he had ridden through the straggling and unprotected streets and lanes of which it was composed, he found that he could effect nothing beyond erecting barricades at the entrance of the several thoroughfares ; and perceiving that in the event of an attack it would be utterly impossible for him to hold out longer than a few hours, he despatched an urgent letter to Bonni-vet, describing the extreme peril of his situation, and entreating him not to lose a moment in forwarding the promised reinforcements. But when messenger succeeded messenger to the main camp, and no answer was returned, Bayard became convinced that he must rely entirely upon his own little band ; and a bitter conviction grew upon him that the jeopardy in which he was thus placed had been premeditated. He had long been aware of the jealousy borne towards him by the favourite, by whom the renown of every military leader in the French armies had invariably been considered as a personal injustice ; although in the frankness of his nature he had never suffered himself to suspect that he would be guilty of leading one of his sovereign's officers into an ambush so hopeless as that in which he now found himself entrapped ; and he made a solemn

vow that should his life be spared he would demand satisfaction at the sword's point.

Days and nights passed on during which the good knight never put off his armour, and even deprived himself of sleep until fatigue had so seriously undermined his health that he could not rise from his bed, and thus found himself constrained to delegate his authority to some of his superior officers. These, however, having since their arrival seen no cause for alarm, proved less stringent than himself, and having satisfied themselves upon their midnight round that all was silent in the enemy's camp, they retired to their quarters, after enjoining the sentinels to vigilance.

The Marquis de Pescara had, meanwhile, ascertained with how small a force Bayard had occupied the hamlet, and resolved to surprise him ; while, in order to prevent any mistake during the darkness, his men were instructed to wear their shirts over their armour ; and thus, guided by a couple of peasants who were familiar with all the outlets of the village, the Spaniards, to the number of six thousand foot and five hundred horse, moved noiselessly towards Rebec, where all was so silent that for a time they suspected the French troops had retired.

At length, however, they reached the advanced sentinels, who immediately commenced a rapid retreat, raising an alarm as they fell back upon the barricades ; while, as the first cry echoed through the streets, the good knight sprang from his sick-bed, and, seizing his lance, rushed towards the bar-

rier, followed by De Lorges and half a dozen men-at-arms, when he encountered a body of the emperor's troops, who were clamorously demanding to be led to his quarters, and offering a reward to whomsoever would enable them to take him. With his own hand, enfeebled as he was by sickness, he overthrew the foremost, upon which his gallant little band, reassured by his sudden apparition among them, seconded him bravely ; but he had no sooner ascertained the number of the enemy than he became convinced that all opposition was fruitless, and beckoning De Lorges to his side he bade him instantly retreat with his infantry to Biagrasso.

"Go," he said rapidly, "save all the lives you can before the whole body of the imperialists pass the barrier. All else must be abandoned ; do not lose a moment. I will cover your retreat with my gendarmes, and follow you, should it be God's will."

This order was promptly executed, and while the Italian troops withdrew by an opposite avenue the good knight and his cavalry so resolutely repulsed the advancing enemy that they had ultimately time to wheel their horses in their turn towards the main camp, having lost only nine men throughout this gallant defence.

On reaching Biagrasso Bayard at once proceeded to the quarters of Bonnivet, whom he upbraided vehemently for his treachery and bad faith ; and the quarrel proceeded to such a length that a personal combat must have been inevitable had not the menacing aspect of public affairs induced both

leaders to defer for a time the settlement of their private differences.

The imperial army had received a reinforcement of six thousand lansquenets levied by the Venetian states ; and Bourbon, who had hitherto been passive, now occupied Milan, and began to act on the offensive. Perpetual skirmishes weakened the ranks of Bonnivet without acquiring for him the slightest advantage ; sickness had declared itself among his troops, while the Swiss refused to remain longer partakers of these perpetual and unprofitable disasters, and, according to their usual custom, marched out of the city and returned home. In this extremity, determined to achieve at least some glory before he abandoned the enterprise upon which he had entered without a single misgiving, Bonnivet made use of every stratagem he could devise for provoking the Duc de Bourbon to an engagement. The haughty connétable, however, disdained to encounter one of whom he still affected to speak as his vassal, and while he pertinaciously harassed his troops by continual sallies he gave him no opportunity of meeting his own army in the open field.

At length intelligence reached the French camp that six thousand Swiss were marching to their aid by Sessia, and a like number by Bergamo, upon which Bonnivet determined to fall back upon Novara ; and he had no sooner accomplished this movement than Bourbon, in order to prevent the junction which it was intended to facilitate, marched his main body to a convenient spot between Sessia

and Novara to oppose the passage of the first ; while Giovanni de' Medici crossed the Ticino, and by this movement impeded the progress of the other. In addition to this disaster the French general had no sooner evacuated Biagrasso, the only strong fortress which still remained in his power, than it was besieged and taken by Sforza ; nor did the evil end there, for it was discovered that the plague, which was raging in the city, had extended to his troops, who were daily dying in great numbers ; while the scarcity of provisions, from which they had been suffering for several weeks, tended to give added virulence to the disease.

Thus enclosed between two divisions of the hostile army, and disappointed of the anticipated reinforcements, Bonnivet called a council of war, at which it was decided that, as effectual resistance had now become impossible, a retreat should be attempted. In accordance with this arrangement the French troops left Novara at midnight and marched upon Romagnano, a hamlet situated upon the left bank of the Sessia ; and before daylight they succeeded in passing the river ere they were overtaken by the enemy. Here they joined their Swiss allies, and then proceeded towards Ivrea, with the intention of entering France by Lower Valais. They had now only ten leagues to march ere they reached a place of safety, and already the flagging spirits of the harassed soldiery began to revive. Bonnivet had, moreover, taken the precaution to erect a field-battery upon the river-bank to impede

the passage of the enemy, and great confidence was felt in the sagacity of this arrangement. It proved, however, ineffectual, as the imperialists discovered a ford lower down the stream upon which the guns could not be brought to bear, and they consequently continued their pursuit without impediment, keeping up a brisk attack upon the rear of the retreating column. Bonnivet, who commanded the rear-guard, returned their fire with considerable effect, and steadily continued his march; while Bayard at the head of his gendarmes maintained a skirmishing warfare, which protected the main body. At length a musket ball broke the sword-arm of the French general and compelled him to retire from the hazardous position he had hitherto resolutely held, upon which he summoned to his side the good knight and the Comte de Vandenesse, the brother of La Palice.

"I pray and conjure you," he said to Bayard, "for the sake of your own honour, and the glory of the French name, to defend, as you so well know how to do, the standards which I am now compelled to entrust to your tried valour and fidelity. M. de Vandenesse will command the artillery, but I leave the troops in your charge."

"I thank you, my lord, for the confidence which you express in my loyalty," replied the good knight. "Had you always done me the same honour heretofore, both my country and my sovereign might have profited by my exertions and my own safety have been better secured. In any case, however, I shall

do my duty ; and so long as I have life our standards shall never fall into the hands of the enemy."

He then assumed the command of the retreating forces ; and he had scarcely placed himself at the head of the gendarmes when a stone from a *hacquebouse*¹ struck the Comte de Vandenesse, and inflicted a mortal wound, of which he died three days afterwards.

As he fell, Bayard turned upon the enemy and made so vigorous a charge that he compelled them for a time to retreat upon their main body ; but as he was about to rejoin his own force he was in his turn smitten by a similar missile, which struck him across the loins and fractured his spine. As he felt the blow he reeled in his saddle, exclaiming—"Jesus, my God, I am killed!" He then, with some difficulty, raised to his lips the hilt of his sword, which was in the form of a cross, kissed it, recommended his soul to God, and fainted. In an instant a dozen hands were outstretched to support him, and while he was led to a place of safety he rallied, and besought those about him to set him with his back against a tree to which he pointed, and to place him with his face towards the imperialists.

"I feel," he gasped out, "that I have but a few moments to live, and I will not, for the first time, turn my back upon the enemy. Comrades, to the charge! the Spaniards are advancing. Let me once more see the gleaming of our lances."

¹ A weapon similar in construction to a *harquebuss*, but of much larger calibre, which launched stones instead of shot.



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FROM A PRINT BY DE MARCENAY AFTER AN ORIGINAL PORTRAIT

IN POSSESSION OF THE MARQUIS DE BRANCAS



The sobs of his maitre-d'hôtel, who was supporting his head, again recalled him to himself. "Jacques, my friend," he murmured affectionately, "be comforted. It is the will of God that I should now leave this world, in which He has blessed me far beyond my deserts. His will be done!"

As no priest was on the field to receive his confession, he sent to summon the Seigneur d'Alegre, the Provost of Paris, whom he entreated to act as his chaplain, and to whom he humbly declared his sins; after which he besought him to bear his last vows of fidelity to the king his master, and to assure him that the most bitter pang which he experienced in dying was the consciousness that he could never again wield a lance in his service.

"And now," he said, glancing round upon the soldiers who were thronging about him, regardless of the peril by which they were momentarily threatened, "and now, my friends and comrades, leave me, I entreat you; and do not let me suffer the misery of seeing you fall into the hands of your enemies; your care can avail me nothing;—go, and pray for my soul."

For the first time, however, he was disobeyed. Still the imperialists advanced, and still the weeping soldiers stood motionless, gazing upon their expiring idol. Not another blow was struck by the French; and as the enemy came up they heard only one long wail of grief, coupled with the name of Bayard.

Pescara was in the van of the army, and at once apprehending the truth, he made his way to the spot

where the good knight was still struggling with the death-agony. As his eye fell upon him the Spanish general dropped his sword, and then bending down, he raised the hand of his erewhile enemy respectfully to his lips.

"Would to God, my good lord of Bayard," he said, "that at the cost of a quart of my own blood, so death had not ensued, I might have met you in good health, and as my prisoner, that so I might have proved how much I honour the exalted prowess that is in you; knowing as I do that the emperor my master has never had a braver or a bolder enemy; and, may God be my help! I would rather have given half of all that I am worth than that this should have chanced."

As Pescara turned away, the Duc de Bourbon advanced in his turn, and, withdrawing his helmet, bent bareheaded over his old companion in arms. "Alas, Bayard!" he said, in an accent of deep emotion, "how do I grieve to see you, whom I have always loved and honoured, expiring before my eyes!"

"Monseigneur," replied the good knight, making an effort to subdue the agony under which he writhed, "I thank you for your sympathy, but I desire no pity at your hands; I die like a true man, in the service of my king and my country. Rather save your pity for yourself, who are bearing arms against your faith, your sovereign, and your nation."

Bourbon turned away in silence: the iron had entered into his heart.

During this brief interview Pescara had caused a magnificent marquee to be pitched upon the field, and the wounded man was conveyed upon the crossed lances of some of his own followers to a camp-bed beneath it, beside which he found a priest, to whom he once more confessed himself. The imperialist general then took up his station beside him, and remained at his post until, slightly raising himself upon his pillow, the dying man once more pressed his sword to his lips, and faintly murmuring his war-cry of "God and my country!" sank back and expired.

A guard of honour was immediately stationed at the entrance of the tent, and the body embalmed; after which all the gentlemen and equeries of his household, who had surrendered on the sole condition that they should be permitted to see him once more before his interment, were indiscriminately admitted, although the same privilege was refused to individuals of higher rank in the opposite army; and as they retired they were severally informed that they were free, as the generals of the emperor had no desire that they should expiate by captivity the performance of a high and sacred duty.

The body of Bayard was then borne to the church by a party of his own gendarmes, and solemn services were performed during two days; after which it was delivered over to the principal officers of his household, to be conveyed to the family vault in Dauphiny, according to his request. As the funeral procession traversed Savoy the duke caused similar

honours to be shown to the manes of the departed hero as he would have rendered to those of a kinsman. Piedmont paid him the same respect, and in Dauphiny every house was closed and the belfry of every church rang a burial-peal. But the greatest triumph of the deceased warrior was the mournful cry of the bereaved army, the sob of the scarred veteran in his tent, and the sigh of the ardent young adventurer by the fire of his bivouac. Even the mournful exclamation of Francis, when the fatal news of the death of his famous knight was communicated to him, was less touching ; for he thought of himself rather than of his faithful warrior as he exclaimed : " Alas ! I have lost a great captain. He carries with him into the grave many of the brightest jewels which might have been added to my crown."

And the hardy soldiers, seated in groups about their camp-fires, forgot their own prowess—forgot their own renown—and only murmured among themselves when peril was approaching, or honour was to be gained : " Bayard should have been here ! —but Bayard is in his grave !"

CHAPTER VI

1524

The Milanese lost to France—Bourbon and Pescara pursue the fugitive army—Bourbon proposes to march into the interior of France—Descent of Pescara—They besiege Marseilles—The city is relieved by Lorenzo de Céri—Francis regulates the internal economy of the kingdom—Levies a force to oppose Bourbon—Noble defence of the Marseillaise—Disappointment of Bourbon—Taunt of Pescara—The Imperialists retreat—Francis resolves to regain the Milanese—Determines to head the army in person, is dissuaded by his mother, but persists—Death of Queen Claude—Heartlessness of the king—Mademoiselle de Voland—Louise de Savoie persecutes M. de Semblançay—He is dismissed and exiled from the Court—Milan is taken by the French—Its deplorable condition—Imprudence of Francis—The French encamp at Mirabello—They assault Pavia and are repulsed—Alarm of the Pope—He declares his neutrality—Enters into a secret treaty with Francis—Position of the French army—The garrison of Pavia mutiny—Supplies are introduced into the city by stratagem—Da Leyva robs the churches to pay his troops—Charles V. declines to restore the ecclesiastic ornaments—Bourbon joins the army at the head of a German force—The main body of the Imperialists march upon Pavia—The Swiss desert from the French army, and are followed by a large body of Italians—The Imperialists endeavour to bring Francis to a general engagement—Evil influence of Bonnivet—Battle of Pavia—Death of the Maréchal de Chabannes—Ostentatious vanity of the French king—Bonnivet throws himself into the ranks of the enemy and is killed—Death of the Comte de Saint Severin—Cowardice of the Duc d'Alençon—Slaughter of the Lansquenets—Escape of Pescara—Final charge of Bourbon—Francis endeavours to effect his escape from the field—Is captured—M. de Pompérant recognises the king and rescues him from violence—He refuses to surrender his sword to Bourbon—Francis claims the hospitality of the Marquis de Guasto—His wounds are dressed—Delivers his sword to the Viceroy of Naples—Refuses to receive the homage of Bourbon—Pescara summons the king to set forth for Pavia—Lescun and Bourbon search for the body of Bonnivet—Results of the battle—Enthusiastic admiration of the Imperialist soldiers for Francis—He is removed to Pizzighitona—Has an interview with Bourbon—Discusses the events of the battle with Pescara—Pardons Pompérant—The fortunate prisoner—M. de Montpezat is ransomed by the king—Hypocrisy of Charles V.

THE deaths of Bayard and Vandenesse were the greatest loss sustained by the French during the retreat, if we except that of the duchy itself, which was once more in the hands of the confederated sovereigns. As regarded the troops, few had fallen, although all had suffered greatly alike from fatigue and privation ; yet when Bonnivet again crossed the French frontier it was with the humiliating consciousness that his defeat had been more fatal to the interests of Francis than any by which it had been preceded in the Milanese. The retreat was also effected in such confusion that Bourbon and Pescara resolved to pursue the fugitives ; but the jealousy of the Spanish general would not permit him to follow the advice of the duke, who suggested the expediency of pushing forward at once to the interior, declaring his conviction that, so soon as he should reach Bourbonnais, Beaujolais, and Auvergne, all which countries had formerly been his own, the inhabitants would instantly join his standard. To this scheme Pescara, however, could not be induced to listen ; and, accordingly, after much expostulation on the part of Bourbon, it was decided that their joint armies should proceed to the frontiers of Provence, where the pledge of the ex-connétable was to a certain degree redeemed ; for not only did the lesser towns through which they passed receive him with little more than a mere show of resistance, and, at his suggestion, swear fidelity to the emperor, but even Aix, the capital of Provence, admitted him within its walls on the 9th of August ; and ten days

subsequently the confederated generals, with an army composed of seven thousand lansquenets, six thousand Spanish infantry, two thousand Italians, and six hundred light-horse, sat down before Marseilles.

Nor was even this formidable force the only one by which the besieged citizens were threatened, as M. de Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, engaged shortly to follow with a body of six thousand cavalry; while Ugo de Moncada was to keep the whole army supplied with provisions and ammunition, which were to be conveyed by a fleet of sixteen galleys to the coast.

On ascertaining the strait to which the Marseillaise were reduced, Francis lost no time in despatching Brion Chabot (as he had previously done to the Parisians) to assure the citizens of effective aid; but before he arrived Lorenzo de Céri had already thrown himself into the town with the remnant of his battalion of Italian patriots, now reduced, however, to four thousand men, and even those so worn by fatigue and wounds that few of them survived this new demand upon their energies.

On the departure of Bonnivet for Italy, Francis had returned to Blois, where he for the first time exerted himself to regain the affections of the people, who were indignant at the defection of Bourbon, which they justly attributed to his persecution by the Court; and it was no sooner made known that he would be accessible to all petitions than he was

inundated with complaints against the soldiery and the fiscal agents. To the representations of the peasantry he replied by authorizing them to resist, even by violent measures, the rapine of the troops, to take possession of their own property wherever they might find it, and to deliver over the marauders to the provost-marshals when they chanced to fall into their hands. He next regulated and equalized the taxes ; and, finally, he commanded that all funds raised in the provinces should be at once conveyed to Blois to meet the national exigencies ; while he at the same time in some degree curtailed his personal expenses, ordaining that all presents which he might hereafter make in specie should be paid only at the end of the year, after all the public accounts were settled, "excepting always," said the ordonnance in conclusion, "the current outlay necessary to our own privy necessities and pleasures."

The jeopardy of Marseilles, however, sufficed to arouse the king for a time from the selfish indulgences to which he was so painfully addicted. He had vainly endeavoured to doubt the advent of Bourbon into his very kingdom at the head of an army ; but when at length he was compelled to admit the fact, he hastily raised a corps of observation, instructed to harass the confederates by every means short of an engagement, which was to be carefully avoided. He, moreover, levied fourteen thousand foot and six thousand lansquenets in Switzerland, and divided them between François

Duc de Lorraine and Richard de la Pole, together with fourteen or fifteen hundred cavalry. He also despatched *ad interim* the Maréchal de Chabannes, with orders to possess himself of the city of Avignon before it fell into the hands of the enemy—an enterprise in which he succeeded.

Meanwhile the position of Bourbon was onerous in the extreme. The citizens rose as one man to oppose him, and the burgher-guard alone soon amounted to nine thousand men. Nor was it solely against male valour that he was called upon to contend, all ranks of women throughout the city vying with each other in their efforts to second the noble exertions of their fathers and brothers, and succeeding so efficiently in defending one of the trenches, whence the troops had been withdrawn to meet an attack upon another point, that it has ever since been known as "The Ladies' Trench." Those who were too weak to hurl missiles or to supply ammunition to the combatants bore away the wounded and ministered to their wants, while so resolute were the inhabitants never to surrender their city, that the siege lasted forty days, and the sacrifice of life on both sides was immense.

An evil star appeared to rule the fortunes of Bourbon. The supplies of which he had wrung a promise from England did not arrive; and the Italian troops, satisfied by the expulsion of the French from their territories, refused to co-operate across the frontier, loudly insisting that a represent-

ation should be made to the emperor to secure the mediation of the Pope, by which peace might be restored throughout Europe. The imperial flotilla was, moreover, encountered by the galleys of Andrea Doria, and the French vessels under La Fayette the vice-admiral; several of the ships were destroyed and others taken, together with all on board, among whom was Philibert de Chalon, Prince of Orange; and meanwhile Bourbon was as ill seconded within the camp as without.

At the commencement of the siege he had treated the matter lightly, for, deceived by the facility with which he had rendered himself master of the other towns of Provence, he did not calculate upon any protracted resistance on the part of the Marseillaise, and was unguarded enough to declare that half a dozen discharges of artillery would bring the terrified citizens to the feet of the confederated generals with the keys of the fortress in their hands and ropes about their necks; and so great was the influence which he possessed over the troops that they would have placed implicit confidence in the assurance, had not Pescara, who had already writhed beneath a conviction of the duke's paramount importance in his own country, imbued the soldiers with feelings of suspicion and distrust towards his person, which soon induced fatal results. The arrival of Lannoy was also painfully delayed; and although the invading army had reached Provence at the beginning of July, it was not until the 7th of September that the

besiegers were enabled to mount their battery with the heavy ordnance which they had brought for the purpose from Toulon and Bregançon, while their musketry produced no impression whatever upon the walls of the city; and this was the more mortifying to the confederated generals from the fact that the artillery of the enemy was in excellent condition and admirably served, producing an amount of damage in their camp for which they had been totally unprepared.

The Italian patriots under Lorenzo de Céri also succeeded by their constant sallies in impeding the mining and other labours of the imperialists, while so constant and well-directed a fire was sustained against them that on one occasion during the performance of mass in the tent of the Marquis de Pescara, the officiating priest and two of the attendants were killed by a cannon ball. Attracted by the confusion consequent on the event, Bourbon hastened to the scene of action, anxiously inquiring what had occurred, when the Spanish general, who had remained calm and self-possessed during the uproar, sarcastically requested him to dismiss all uneasiness, as it was only the timid burghers of Marseilles, who, according to his pledge, were on their way with the city keys and their necks in the noose to deliver themselves and their fortress into his hands.

A day or two subsequently a breach was effected by means of the heavy ordnance, and an attempt was made to take the city by storm; but Lorenzo

de Céri so effectually protected the opening by means of a strong rampart and a deep ditch that it was found impracticable; and Pescara no sooner ascertained the fact than he proceeded to the tent of Bourbon, in which a council of war was then sitting, and, without affecting to remark the duke himself, exclaimed vehemently: "Gentlemen—You who will it may go to heaven; there are means at hand, if you only remain and persevere in this siege; but as I can wait, I shall return to Italy before I lose alike my life and my renown."

As he ceased speaking he left the tent, and was followed by every individual of the council save Bourbon himself, who had no alternative save to issue orders for a retreat, which he now saw would be effected equally without his sanction. At that moment he became bitterly aware that he had lost at once substance and shadow. The independent kingdom and the royal wife, both of which his sword and his name were to have secured to him, had alike eluded his grasp; he was no longer the powerful master of a dozen provinces upon whom victory had waited; he was an outlawed, exiled, worsted general, an alien alike in his own land and in that which he had adopted.

On the 28th of September the retreat accordingly commenced, deliberately and in good order; but it was not effected without molestation, the Maréchal de Chabannes, at the head of six hundred horse, falling upon the rear of the column, and not only

destroying a great number of the enemy, but also securing an enormous quantity of booty; while Montmorency with a strong force pursued them as far as Toulon, and did considerable damage, although he did not succeed in arresting their march.

On the 28th of June, Francis had written from Amboise to assure the citizens of Provence that he would immediately march in person to their assistance; and for this purpose he had collected an army consisting of fourteen hundred Swiss, six thousand lansquenets, ten thousand French and Italian infantry, and fifteen hundred horse. The retreat of the confederated generals, however, rendered this reinforcement unnecessary; and, dazzled by such unhopèd-for success, Francis, who once more saw himself master of a considerable army, resolved to make a new attempt to regain the Milanese.

The most experienced of his generals attempted to dissuade him from so quixotic a project, representing that the autumn was now nearly at an end, and that his army must be inevitably weakened and exhausted by the mere casualties of so formidable a march even before they met the enemy; but to this objection he replied by haughtily remarking that such as were afraid of the cold might remain in Provence. He had been assured by Bonnivet that his presence alone was required to ensure the subjugation of the duchy, and his vanity was flattered by the prospect of succeeding where older and more

tried soldiers had failed. Equally in vain were the expostulations of Louise de Savoie, who, having been informed of his altered intentions, despatched a courier to entreat him to await her arrival, as she had secrets of great importance to communicate, while at the same time she informed him of the death of the queen, whose long failing health had at length given way under her perpetual mortifications.

Neither consideration, however, could change or retard his resolution; and contenting himself by simply expressing his regret at the demise of his wife, and confirming the authority of his mother as regent of France during his absence, the king immediately hastened to cross the Alps and to pursue his march to Milan.

But if Francis in his selfish enthusiasm failed to mourn over the fate of his victim, his subjects at least avenged her. Gentle and unobtrusive as her life had been, the Good Queen Claude, as the burghers and people were accustomed to designate her, had left a thousand memories of long-enduring sweetness and inexhaustible charity as a monument in their hearts. Her whole existence had been one of suffering. Reared in strict seclusion, she had given her first and only affection to her young husband; nor had neglect, harshness, or inconstancy tended to weaken it. Aware of his excesses, she pardoned without seeking to avenge them, and when some passing remorse brought him for a time to her side she forgot the tears which he

had cost her, and welcomed him with a smile. But the daughter of Louis XII. was less strong in body than in mind, and her perpetual sufferings terminated her life on the 26th of October, at the palace of Blois, at the early age of twenty-five. She was interred as modestly as she had lived; the king was absent; and no pompous ceremonial, alien to her gentle spirit, desecrated her remains.

In one thing, at least, Francis was sincere, for he did not even affect a semblance of grief at her death. She had left him three sons, and the succession was assured; he was about to effect the conquest of the Milanese, and he had no leisure for domestic regrets; a loving heart was cold, but his own was capacious, and he was now free. So little, indeed, was he touched by her loss, that only a few weeks subsequently, when during his progress through Provence, the citizens of Manosque caused the keys of their city to be presented to him by the most beautiful girl of the place, the looks and gestures of the king so terrified the young and timid Mademoiselle de Voland, that, discovering no other method of escaping from insult, she applied sulphuric acid to her face on her return home, and thus heroically and effectually put an end to the licentious advances of her royal admirer.

Having failed in dissuading her son from his new enterprise, Louise de Savoie, now regent of France, began to feel that she was in a position to revenge upon the minister of finance the affront to which she

had been subjected through his uncompromising probity ; and she accordingly hastened to suggest to Francis the expediency of borrowing a large sum from De Semblançay to enable him to support the expenses of his Italian expedition without harassing his subjects. The king, who eagerly welcomed any measure by which he could be relieved from his monetary difficulties, did not hesitate to avail himself of the hint ; but the old minister, who had already advanced three hundred thousand crowns from his own private fortune to uphold the dignity of the sovereign, and who saw no prospect of their ever being repaid, respectfully but firmly declined to make any further advance.

"I have claims upon me, madame," he said, when the regent laid before him the letter of the king, "which compel me to withhold any further loan to the Crown."

"You refuse then, sir?"

"I have no alternative, madame ; I am now an old man, and cannot look forward to redeem my losses ; nor must your highness deem it an act of disrespect or disloyalty, if, while reluctantly obliged to disappoint the expectations of my sovereign, I also crave the repayment of my previous loan."

"Sir," said the duchess, as she rose haughtily from her chair, and fixed her large eyes coldly and sternly upon his, "do you wish to destroy yourself?"

"I am at a loss to understand you, madame?"

"I shall ere long make my meaning clearer. I will not detain you longer. Go, and reflect."

With a low obeisance, which was, nevertheless, as haughty as her own, the venerable minister retired, and for a few days Louise de Savoie waited to ascertain the result of her threat; but as M. de Semblançay evinced no disposition to relent, she despatched a messenger to the army, who returned with an order for the dismissal of the finance minister, signed by the king himself, when she arrogantly informed him that he was at liberty to retire at once from the Court; a permission of which he immediately and gladly availed himself, and withdrew to an estate which he possessed near Tours.

The capture of Milan was soon effected—M. de Lannoy, by whom it was held, being unable to make an effective resistance against so strong a force as that by which he was now assailed. But Milan was no longer what it had formerly been. Impoverished, not only by the pillage of its enemies, but also by the exactions of those who had professed to be its friends, its battered houses filling its deserted streets with unsightly ruins, and its diminished population still trembling at the recollection of the fearful plague to which hundreds of their fellow-townsmen had fallen victims, nothing could be more uninviting to the eyes of a conqueror than the aspect of the once proud city which had so long been the centre of conflicting ambitions.

Had the French king pursued the retreating army,

it is probable that he would have driven them out of Italy; as the people, wearied and outraged by the iron rule of Spain and Germany, were anxious for their expulsion; while his unexpected success had so alarmed the new pope, Clement VII., that he entered into a treaty by which he bound himself to furnish him with supplies for carrying on the war; while the monarch, on his side, pledged himself to protect the interests of the Ecclesiastical States and the members of the Medici family. But, intoxicated by the brilliant commencement of his campaign, and surrounded by a bevy of hot-headed favourites, who, by flattering his weakness, ensured their own interests, Francis, who was personally brave, and who panted to distinguish himself in the eyes of the emperor, yielded to that passion for knight-errantry which had been his bane as a general from his very youth, and, disdaining to turn aside from his one great purpose, suffered the confederalists to concentrate their forces and to mature their plans; while by the insidious advice of his chosen friends he pursued his march to Pavia, taking possession as he went of every fortress upon the way.

At the passage of the Ticino he experienced considerable resistance from the garrison of a fort, which, however, ultimately fell into his hands; and he was so exasperated by the delay which their pertinacity had induced, that they no sooner surrendered than he caused every individual to be hanged who still survived within the walls; declaring that "they had richly earned their fate by daring to attempt the

defence of such a hen-roost against the army of the King of France."

The park of Mirabello affording an admirable position, the French army encamped there for the purpose of investing Pavia, which was defended by Da Leyva,¹ who had exerted all his energies to strengthen the fortifications, and who was so ably and zealously seconded by the inhabitants that he was enabled effectually to carry out his object. So great, indeed, was the enthusiasm of the citizens that, as at Marseilles, even the women worked in the trenches; and ere long it became evident that the city could not be taken by assault.

The attempt made by the French troops to effect

¹ Antonio da Leyva, who was reported to have been the son of a shoemaker, made his first campaign under the standard of Emanuel de Benavides, when he invaded Messina with an army of two thousand four hundred Spaniards, where he drew upon himself the attention of that general by his extraordinary valour and intrepidity. His rise was consequently rapid, until the period of the battle of Ravenna, where he, in common with those about him, fled from the field. He subsequently, however, redeemed his honour by his gallant defence of Pavia, and his successful opposition to the several generals who were sent against him, among whom were the Maréchal de Lautrec and the Comte de Saint-Pol; although, during the latter portion of his military career, he had become so great a victim to the gout and other constitutional maladies that he was compelled to be carried on a litter at the head of his troops.

After the victory of Pavia he adopted as his device a hive, about which the bees were swarming, with the motto, *Sic vos non vobis*. The taking of Fossan was his last and crowning exploit; but the defeat and capture of Francis I. at Pavia had already secured to him the favour of the emperor, through whose influence he was enabled to realize a gigantic fortune, which he bequeathed to his children, having previously married his daughters to some of the wealthiest grandees of Spain. The tomb of this brave and fortunate soldier, who had entered the army obscure and unknown, was inscribed with the pompous titles of Prince of Ascoli, Duc de Terranova, Marquis d'Attello, and Primate of the Canary Islands.

this object proved indeed most disastrous ; for, misled by the fact that the outer walls were not guarded by a ditch, and that their artillery was consequently enabled to approach so near as to open a wide breach, they began to anticipate an easy conquest. They soon, however, discovered that the ditch which was wanting without the walls had been formed within, while every private house had been converted into a fortress and filled with troops. Foiled in this attempt, the French Engineers endeavoured to turn one of the courses of the Ticino, which bathes the walls of Pavia, and to compel it into another channel, but the rainy season having set in they found it impossible to effect their purpose. There remained, consequently, no alternative save that of sitting down before the city, occupying the several thoroughfares which led to its gates, and by thus cutting off all supplies awaiting the result of famine.

The Pope, alarmed by hostilities which threatened to destroy the peace of Italy for an interminable period, and seeing the whole country rapidly becoming the prey of two hostile sovereigns who were alike strangers, but each of whom was endeavouring to undermine its liberty and independence, declared that he would not espouse the interest of either party, but, as the head of Catholic Europe, was ready at any moment to mediate between them. He accordingly despatched to Francis his apostolical datary, Juan Matteo Ghiberti, proposing a general truce for five years, while a second messenger was accredited to De Lannoy with the same suggestion. It was, how-

ever, coldly rejected on both sides, with the assurance of the French king in reply that ere long he should be master of Pavia and sovereign of the Milanese ; while Lannoy, acting for the emperor, bade the papal envoy inform his holiness that he would never affix his name to any treaty or truce which could tend to leave one foot of ground in the contested duchy under the dominion of Francis.

His interference having proved unavailing upon this point, the pontiff next demanded to maintain his own neutrality and that of the other Italian states ; but, although this was listlessly conceded by both parties, the privilege became merely nominal, from the fact that Clement VII. was at once too undecided and too avaricious to take the necessary steps to uphold the dignity of his high station. Fearful of favouring the party which might ultimately fail, he waited to observe the progress of events ; and too fond of money to maintain an army such as might have enabled him rather to dictate terms to the two invading princes than to ask impunity for his own supineness, he remained powerless and unprotected, an easy prey to the victor.

The firm attitude assumed by Francis induced him, however, to enter into a secret treaty with that sovereign, by which he pledged himself that neither he himself individually, the city of Florence, nor the Venetian senate, should furnish the emperor with any supplies, either of men or money ; while the French king agreed, in consideration of this promise, to take the Florentine republic under his immediate

protection; but although this treaty was probably made in all sincerity on both sides, it availed little to Francis, as the Venetians allowed the Duc de Bourbon to traverse their territories unmolested in the month of January following at the head of a large force.

Meanwhile Francis appeared to have greatly the advantage over his enemies, surrounded as he was by a numerous and well-organized army, all eager to encounter the imperialists, and to win renown under the eyes of their sovereign. His treasury was, moreover, well supplied, and provisions were poured into his camp from every side. New levies had been raised in Switzerland, and constant reinforcements increased the bulk of his already gigantic force. The imperial generals were, on the contrary, at the head of a body of men exhausted by the previous campaign, disheartened by this new and formidable opposition, weakened by an epidemic which had broken out among the troops, and utterly without pecuniary resources. The weather was, however, greatly in their favour, as, although the French continued to keep up a heavy fire upon the walls, and endeavoured to undermine them, the quantity of rain which fell impeded all their measures.

Nevertheless, Francis calculated so firmly upon the effects of famine and privation within the city, where he had been already informed by his spies that symptoms of mutiny had appeared among the garrison, that he resolved to detach a portion of his

army, which was rapidly becoming weary of inaction, to the assistance of the Angevin party, who had declared their desire to take up arms against the Spaniards on the Neapolitan territories. Every circumstance tended to render the moment a propitious one for such an enterprise. Lannoy, in order to strengthen his army in the Milanese, had left Naples almost defenceless; the secret treaty entered into with the Pope relieved Francis from all apprehension of his hostility; Pescara had absolutely refused to hazard an engagement with the French, by which alone the design against Naples might have been frustrated; and the imperialist soldiers were sullenly murmuring, not only at the daily privations which they were compelled to undergo, but also at the long arrears of pay which disabled them from procuring any alleviation of their sufferings. From the emperor there was, moreover, little to fear at that particular juncture, as he was confined to a sick-bed in Spain, and at the head of an army alike weak and discontented, while perpetual feuds had rendered his generals distrustful of each other. All considerations appeared to favour a revolution in Naples, and Francis accordingly confided the command of a body of nine thousand men to the Duc d'Aubigny, the ex-regent of Scotland, with instructions to act against the Spaniards.

For a time Da Leyva was enabled to silence the murmurs of the garrison of Pavia by assurances that ample funds for the payment of their arrears were in the hands of the viceroy Lannoy, to whom he wrote,

earnestly representing the impossibility of sustaining the siege unless he received immediate supplies. Lannoy was aware that his position was critical; but the investment of the city by the French troops rendering it impossible to convey relief to the besieged save by stratagem, he was compelled to have recourse to a bold and hazardous experiment, of which he was careful to apprise da Leyva; and a short time subsequently two Spanish troopers in the garb of peasants, mounted upon sturdy and ill-groomed hacks, and each leading a second horse charged with a couple of wine-barrels, presented themselves before the French camp, and asked permission to enter in order to vend their merchandise. They were gladly welcomed, that necessary luxury to Frenchmen having become rare; and they accordingly rode forward until they were close under the city walls, where they unloaded their animals, and affected to be preparing to stave in the tubs. This was the moment for which the Spanish general had been anxiously watching, and the precious barrels laden with treasure were no sooner lifted to the ground than he made a sudden and desperate sally, and succeeded in possessing himself of the prize.

Ere long, however, the clamours of the troops were renewed; their claims were still unpaid in part, while their numerous necessities had been far from satisfied; and in this new emergency—which was rendered doubly dangerous from the fact that even the lansquenets, who had hitherto remained

passive, began to exhibit symptoms of mutiny in their turn—Da Leyva found himself compelled to resort to the same expedient as the Emperor Dionysius, who tore the golden robe from the shoulders of Apollo, and to strip all the shrines of Padua of their precious metals. Like a good Catholic, however, he accompanied this act of sacrilege by a solemn vow to restore to each of the despoiled altars gifts of still greater value, if he should succeed in defending the city; and with the spoil thus secured he caused a coarse coinage to be struck, with which he paid his army and escaped from the threatened peril.

The priests, at the termination of the siege, ventured humbly to remind him of the sacred pledge that he had given; but Da Leyva politely referred them to the emperor, of whom he told them that he was but the subject and servant, and to whom, as he asserted, they must consequently look for the remuneration which they sought. Charles V., however, whose days of saintship had not yet commenced, and who found it expedient to sink the sovereign in the soldier, declined, when they transmitted their application, to render himself answerable for debts contracted without his sanction; and thus the goodly ornaments of the temples of Pavia were lost to them for ever.

Meanwhile Bourbon had, as we have stated, joined the imperial camp with his new levies; and supported by so powerful a command he was enabled to act independently of Pescara and Lannoy, whose jealousy

and distrust had hitherto paralysed all his efforts. Unfortunately for the French cause, the arrival of the duke occurred almost simultaneously with the departure of D'Aubigny for Naples ; while the fatal effects of the inclement weather to which they were exposed were, moreover, becoming painfully apparent in the relaxed discipline and rapidly thinning ranks of the royal army. Desertions constantly occurred, which were carefully concealed from the king, as well as the mortality that was taking place among the troops ; and he continued to make the necessary disbursements for an efficient army, when many of the regiments were reduced to half their original numbers. The rapacity of the officers to whom these large sums were entrusted became only more inordinate as they found the impunity with which their measures were attended ; upon which Bourbon, when apprized by his emissaries of the fatal error of the king, who soon began to experience considerable inconvenience in meeting so enormous and perpetual an outlay, resolved to take advantage of the circumstance, and suggested an immediate attack upon the enemy. Neither Lannoy nor Pescara, however, were prepared to follow his suggestion ; while the troops openly declared that until they received the full payment of their arrears they would not take the field. As further delay would but deepen this difficulty, it was consequently resolved that the three generals should distribute among their several followers whatever private property they possessed, and at once march upon the French camp ; and

ultimately, on the 25th January 1525, the imperialists struck their tents and left Lodi on their route towards Pavia.

Once again, the partiality of Francis for the Swiss mercenaries was fated to be cruelly shaken ; six thousand Grisons who had voluntarily joined his army being at this period induced to desert his cause by Gian Giacomo de' Medici, who having surprised and taken the castle of Chiavenna, an important fortress on the Lake of Como, so alarmed the inhabitants of the country that they issued orders for the instant return of all their troops then in the pay of France, nor could all the persuasions of the king succeed in detaining them ; a mortification rendered still greater by the fact that they withdrew only five days previous to the battle, while sundry other serious casualties had occurred by which his strength was shaken and his movements crippled. Four thousand Italian troops, raised in Savona by the Marquis de Saluzzo for the service of France, were surprised while crossing the Alessandrino, and were nearly cut to pieces ; Palavicino, with a still stronger reinforcement, was compelled to give battle to the enemy at Casal-Maggiore, where his troops were defeated, and himself taken prisoner ; Juan de' Medici, who commanded the Black Bands, was wounded in the thigh on the 20th of February, and compelled to withdraw from the camp ; and, finally, the Pope, still anxious if possible to put an end to hostilities, once more endeavoured to mediate between the conflicting parties, and urged the

expediency of restoring the Genoese to liberty ; while Spain, after so long a delay, forwarded the sum of a hundred and fifty thousand ducats for the support of her troops, at a period when Francis was beginning to discover the inadequacy of his own resources.

The defection of the Grisons raised the hopes of Da Leyva, who, aware that the imperialist generals were preparing to relieve him, abandoned the purely defensive system which he had hitherto pursued, and by constant and vigorous sallies harassed the French troops, and deprived them of all repose. Their position was, moreover, by no means secure, encamped as they were between a strongly fortified and well-garrisoned city and an advancing army which greatly exceeded them in numbers. On the 1st of February the imperialists had advanced within a mile of the French outposts, where they endeavoured until near the end of the month, by perpetual skirmishes, to induce Francis to pass his entrenchments and to give them battle. At length, wearied of inaction, Pescara determined to effect his entrance into the park of Mirabello, for the purpose of relieving the garrison of Pavia ; or failing in that attempt, forcing the enemy from within their lines to the open ground. The French were, however, prepared for this movement, and the Spanish general accordingly found them drawn up in order of battle, and covered by a formidable force of artillery under the command of Jacques Gaillot de Genouilhac, Sénéchal d'Armagnac.

The vanguard of the imperialists suffered severely as they began to traverse the level plain, but they still persisted in their advance, while the main body under the command of Pescara, and the rear-guard under that of Lannoy and Bourbon, were each in their turn exposed to the same galling fire, until they were enabled to take refuge in a small valley which afforded them partial shelter. Alphonso d'Avalos, Marquis del Guasto,¹ who commanded the vanguard, then instructed his men to scatter themselves, and to make their way as rapidly as they could individually to the walls of the city, in order that they might not present so sure a mark for the enemy's guns—a manœuvre which completely misled Francis, who, surrounded by a brilliant staff, was watching the movements of his adversaries, and no sooner witnessed this apparent confusion than he gave an order to charge, which was eagerly re-echoed by the hot-headed young nobles about him.

¹ The Marquis del Guasto was the cousin of Pescara, under whom he served, until the death of the latter, with considerable distinction, and subsequently became so great a favourite of Charles V. that, during his expedition against Tunis, that sovereign appointed him Lieutenant-general of his forces, and himself yielded the same obedience to his orders which he exacted from others. He was afterwards Lieutenant-general in Italy and the Milanese. He raised the siege of Nice, where he was opposed by M. d'Anguyen and Barbarossa; but lost much of his reputation by his defeat at Cerizola, where he fled from the field before the termination of the battle. Vain as he was brave, M. del Guasto was remarkable for the costliness of his dress and jewels, and for his inordinate love of perfumes, which he used not only upon his own person, but upon the very saddle on which he rode. After his disgraceful flight from Cerizola he redeemed himself by new and valiant exploits, and died only a short time before the French king, whose courtesy he had repaid by treachery and ingratitude.

The words had scarcely died away upon his lips when the whole body of his cavalry galloped to the front, thus suspending the operations of the artillery, while the troops of Del Guasto, profiting by so unexpected a pause, once more formed into line with their face towards the French camp. The imperialist horse, among whom were a body of Spanish harquebussiers, answered the charge of the royal lances with a steady and well-directed fire; and many a noble cavalier bit the dust before the course of the maddened horses could be arrested.

On learning the approach of the confederated army, Francis had lost no time in recalling La Tremouille and Lescun from Milan; but even at that period he remained so prepossessed by the idea that he must inevitably prove successful, that he did not attempt to interfere with any of the measures adopted by Bonnivet; even allowing him on many occasions to preside over the war-councils, and supporting his views in opposition to those of his veteran generals, while he amused himself in his society and that of Anne de Montmorency, Brion, and other enthusiasts, who succeeded in persuading him that his very presence must ensure victory, by arranging gigantic and gorgeous plans consequent upon his conquests, and never destined to be realized.

Somewhat startled, however, by the actual advance of the enemy, Francis assembled about him all his oldest and bravest officers, among whom were La Palice, La Tremouille, René de Savoie, the Duke of Suffolk, Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, and

Lescun, who severally urged upon him the expediency of raising his camp, and taking up a position which might prevent the imperialists from reaching Pavia ; representing that the garrison must inevitably disband itself from want of money and provisions, if, by persisting in his refusal to come to a general engagement, he abandoned it to its own resources. The younger nobles, however, listened scornfully to these suggestions, and were in vain reminded by their more experienced coadjutors that by so prudent a line of policy, not only Pavia itself, but the whole of the duchy must ultimately fall into the hands of the king, declaring the suggestion to be unworthy the consideration of the conqueror of Marignano. La Tremouille then suggested that should Francis indeed decide upon coming to a general engagement, he would act wisely in quitting his camp, and meeting the imperialists in the open plain ; a proposition to which it is probable that the king would readily have acceded, had not Bonnivet, whose rash arrogance could tolerate no opposition, eagerly and vehemently exclaimed—"Are you aware, gentlemen, of the extent of the ignominy which you propose to our brave king, whose valour and courage are well known, when you suggest to him to raise the siege, and to avoid the battle which is now offered to us, and which we have so long desired ? We Frenchmen have never yet refused to meet an enemy, and have not been accustomed to fight according to the rules of petty subterfuges and military artifices, but gallantly and openly ; and still less should we close

now, when we have at our head a bold and valiant sovereign who should give courage to cowards. Kings habitually carry good fortune with them, and not only good fortune, but assured success. Witness our young king Charles VIII. at Taro, Louis XII. at Aignadel, and still more recently our present gracious monarch at Marignano, so efficient is their very presence upon the field. And doubt not, but that on seeing him at the head of his army (for the king, gentlemen, will himself be our leader), all the brave troops by whom he is surrounded will follow his example, and cut down the puny enemy against whom we are called upon to contend. Thus, Sire, let us give battle to the forces of Charles, and that speedily."

This insidious advice was followed ; and as we have shown, the two hostile armies met, but the imprudent movement of Francis had already seriously affected his interests. The cessation of the firing enabled the imperialists to rally, and the Marquis del Guasto had already reached the castle and detached a strong party to the gate of the city, which they were about to enter, when they were driven back by Brion. Other divisions of the imperial army followed on the same track, but they were successively routed by the renewed fire of the French guns, which were turned upon the point where they hoped to have effected their entrance. Francis, however, having detached the flanks of his Swiss and lansquenets, whom he had ordered to advance, had so exposed his main body that Pescara instantly

profited by the error, and threw a body of eight hundred Spanish riflemen upon the enemy's cavalry, while del Guasto attacked the right wing under Montmorency. The Swiss, unprepared for the charge, faltered and gave way; and, on seeing their leader fall, fled from the field, abandoning Montmorency and Fleuranges, who were made prisoners by the enemy. The French troops, nevertheless, stood their ground bravely, and the want of prudence in their leaders was nobly compensated by their steady and resolute valour. But the first error could not be retrieved. Bourbon with his body of Germans, and Pescara at the head of his Spaniards, marched resolutely against the enemy, and were followed by Lannoy on the other flank of the French army, while Antonio de Leyva made an impetuous sally with his cavalry, which greatly assisted their charge.

The Maréchal de la Palice, aware of the advantage obtained by the imperialists, hastened to bring the vanguard into action ere it should be too late; and the Duc d'Alençon, although with less alacrity, also moved forward on the opposite wing; while Francis, who had taken up his position in front of the main body, was surrounded by his gendarmes. No exertion, however, could redeem the fortunes of the day. The king saw himself assailed in three opposite directions, and his bravest officers falling about him on all sides. The gallant and unfortunate De la Pole, or, as he was commonly called by the French, Rose Blanche, fell at the head of the Black

Bands, and thus terminated a career of persecution by an honourable death. The force which he commanded being under the ban of the empire for persisting in their fidelity to the French cause, and detested by the Swiss, who regarded them as dangerous rivals, were, moreover, particularly obnoxious to their own countrymen, by whom they were looked upon as rebels; and thus, aware that they could expect no quarter in the event of defeat, they had fought with such desperate resolution that they had not yielded a foot of ground, and had fallen where they stood, maintaining their position even in death with such resolute pertinacity as to extract the exclamation from Francis, at the termination of the battle, that had all his subjects that day done their duty like the brave men who lay at his feet, Pavia would have changed masters, and the Spanish generals been in bonds instead of himself.

On every side, however, the slaughter was fearful, and much of the best blood of France flowed on that fatal field. The fate of the veteran La Palice was melancholy. He had twice succeeded in beating back the imperialists, when a new reinforcement convinced him that he could no longer cope with so unequal an enemy. His lieutenant, Clermont d'Amboise, to whom he was affectionately attached, was killed under his eyes; but still strong in his indomitable courage, he made a last effort to rally his exhausted forces, when a ball from an harquebuss struck his horse, which fell dead under him. He, however, succeeded in disengaging himself from the

saddle, and had already commenced his retreat towards the infantry when he was taken prisoner. His age and his known valour had inspired his captor with respect, and no indignity was offered to him until he was encountered by a Spanish captain, who, struck by the splendour of his armour and the dignity of his deportment, immediately perceived that he was no common prize, and declared his determination of sharing in so rich a spoil. To this his original captor demurred, and the quarrel became ere long so violent that the intruder, carried away by the violence of his passion, discharged his weapon at the defenceless prisoner, and stretched him at his feet, with an asseveration that if he were not to profit by his capture, no other individual should do so.

And thus the veteran hero, whose military career commenced at Fornova in 1495, and terminated at Pavia in 1525, with scarcely a stain to mar its lustre, fell in cold blood, the victim of a narrow-hearted and sordid wretch, to whom gold was of more value than the life of a fellow-creature.

Had Francis possessed as much military knowledge and sound judgment as he evinced courage and energy on this fateful occasion, the day of Pavia must have been a glorious one for France ; but here, as on every other occasion, he had been deluded by his vanity and betrayed by his want of prudence. Encouraged by the flatterers who surrounded him to believe himself invulnerable to human reverses, he had sacrificed his army in a weak attempt at self-aggrandizement, and by masking his artillery in order

to make a personal assault upon the gates of Pavia, turned the whole tide of the battle. Nor did his imprudence end there, for, by the splendour of his dress, he had rendered himself so conspicuous that his escape in the event of failure became impossible. Already sufficiently distinguished by his tall and commanding person, he wore over his armour a surcoat of cloth of silver, while his helmet was surmounted by a white plume which served as a beacon to the enemy. His exploits on the field, however, did no dishonour to the royalty of his appearance, for the humblest and most obscure man-at-arms under his command could not have fought more valiantly; and for a time Bonnivet equalled him in courage and resolution, but the moment came in which the arrogant favourite felt that all was lost. After having in vain endeavoured to rally the remnant of the Swiss troops and a few gendarmes, he raised the visor of his helmet, and exclaiming, "No, I cannot survive this disgraceful defeat—I must die in the thickest of the fight," he set spurs to his horse, and in a few moments fell pierced by twenty wounds.

Still the king maintained his ground, and at one time with a slight prospect of success; but the Spanish infantry under Pescara, and a body of fifteen hundred Basque crossbow-men whom they protected, receiving them into their ranks after each separate discharge, soon decided the fate of the field. The operations of these skirmishers were so rapid and so erratic that it was impossible either to foresee or to repel their attacks; while by their extraordinary

celerity and quickness of sight they were enabled to approach and pick off the most conspicuous of the enemy. Thus they succeeded in destroying among others the gallant La Tremouille, who fell pierced at once through his head and his heart, and the Comte Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, the grand-écuyer of France, whose duty it was to protect the person of the king—a duty which he had so courageously and devotedly performed that he was riddled with wounds, and when his horse was at length shot under him was almost smothered in his own blood. As a friend who saw him fall hastened to his assistance, and would have conveyed him from the field, true to his oath, he still summoned strength to gasp out, “Leave me; I am beyond your care. Look to the king, and leave me to die.”

It was this critical moment, when nothing save a charge from the infantry upon the Basques could avert the total ruin of the French army, and when the instant arrival of the Duc d’Alençon was confidently anticipated, that the weak and terrified prince selected to command a retreat. He had hitherto taken no part in the engagement, save the solitary demonstration to which we have already alluded; but he nevertheless shrank before the danger which presented itself, and resolved to effect his escape. A strong body of Swiss troops, who had relied on his support, on remarking the retrograde movement of his division, were struck with panic and retired in disorder, believing that their destruction, should they continue to advance, was inevitable; and thus the

remnant of the French army was alone left to rally round their king. In quick succession Longman d'Augsbourg, the captain of the lansquenets, François de Lambesc, the brother of the Duc de Lorraine, Wittemberg de Lauffen, Theodoric de Schomberg, and all the principal leaders of the lansquenets, had fallen upon one fatal spot ; and now another bevy of brave men were collected with scarcely a hope of brighter fortune. And great indeed was the second sacrifice. La Palice and La Tremouille had already fallen, as well as Saint Sévérino and d'Aubigny ; but Lescun, the Comte de Tonnerre, and many others of the first nobility of France, were killed at the side of Francis. The white plume of the sovereign was the rallying point for all the chivalry of the nation ; and even Bussy d'Amboise, who had been instructed to impede the egress of the garrison of Pavia, no sooner discovered the peril of his king than he abandoned his post and hastened to his assistance. Unfortunately, however, he had scarcely reached the royal standard ere he was killed in his turn ; while the Spaniards under Da Leyva, finding themselves by these means enabled to leave the city, rushed tumultuously through the gates, and in the first impulse of vengeance for past constraint massacred the prisoners taken by their comrades.

Yet still the group around the French king defended themselves with unabated energy ; the Basques began in their turn to fall before the enemy whom they had so long and so successfully assailed ; and Pescara, who was at their head, was severely

wounded in the face, unhorsed, and narrowly escaped capture. Had the gendarmes of Francis been efficiently supported at this juncture, much might still have been achieved ; but compelled to act alone against a mixed and superior force, they were reduced to the alternative of retiring closer and closer about the person of the king ; while the advance of Bourbon with his lansquenets, and the impetuous charge to which they were subjected on his approach, created a disorder in their ranks which they were utterly unable to retrieve.

The battle had scarcely lasted throughout an hour, and already it was decided. A few feet of that field which he had confidently hoped would ensure to him the undying glory of a conqueror, were all that remained to Francis ; but even for these few feet he still contended gallantly. With his own hand he had cut down the Marquis de St. Angelo, the last descendant of Scanderbeg, and unhorsed the Chevalier d'Andelot, besides dealing vigorous blows upon others of less note during the earlier period of the battle ; and now, when he fought rather against hope than from any anticipation of success, his aim continued as true and his hand as steady as though an empire still hung on the result of his prowess.

He was already bleeding profusely from three wounds, one of which had traversed his forehead, and caused him acute pain, when his horse was shot under him, and he fell to the ground beside six of his assailants, all of whom had been struck down by his own sword on the same spot. Enfeebled as he was,

he succeeded in disengaging himself from his dead charger, and once more leaping into the saddle of a led horse, which had been prepared in the event of such an emergency, he turned one long and regretful glance upon the chivalrous little group who had so lately formed his best bulwark, but who were now scattered over the plain in a desperate attempt to evade the troops of Bourbon ; and striking his spurs into the flanks of the animal, he galloped off in the direction of the bridge across the Ticino, ignorant that former fugitives had destroyed it after they had effected their own passage. At the moment in which he made this unfortunate discovery he was encountered by four Spanish riflemen, who at once sprang to his bridle, and prevented all further attempts at escape. Providentially, they had expended their ammunition ; but one of the number, fearful that a prisoner whose high rank was apparent from the richness of his costume should elude their grasp, struck the panting horse of the king over the head with the stock of his rifle, and thus precipitated both the animal and his rider into a ditch by the wayside.

This cowardly act was scarcely accomplished when two Spanish light-horsemen, Diégo d'Abila and Juan d'Urbiéta, arrived on the spot ; and being struck by the extreme richness of the king's apparel, and the order of St. Michael with which he was decorated, they at once agreed that the captive was no common prize, and insisted upon their proportion of the ransom money. The situation of Francis was perilous in the extreme, but horsemen were heard

approaching rapidly ; the rattling of armour and the clang of weapons announced a numerous party ; and in the next instant M. de Pompérant, the friend and confidant of Bourbon, and M. de la Motte des Moyers, a gentleman of his household, at the head of a troop of men-at-arms, checked their horses beside the group. One glance sufficed to assure them both that the wounded and exhausted man, from whose brow the blood was still streaming over his glittering surcoat, was the French monarch ; and putting aside the wrangling soldiers, M. de Pompérant sprang from his horse and threw himself at the feet of the king, beseeching him not further to endanger his existence by a resistance which was alike hopeless and desperate.

Faint and subdued by fatigue, suffering, and bitter feeling, Francis leant for an instant upon his sword as if in deliberation. " Rise, sir," he said at length, " it is mockery to kneel to a captive king. I am ready to share the fate of the brave men who have fallen with me. To whom can I resign my sword ? "

" The Duc de Bourbon is on the field, Sire," murmured Pompérant with averted eyes.

" Not so, sir," replied the monarch haughtily, as he once more stood proudly erect. " This sword is that of Francis of France : it cannot be entrusted to a traitor. Rather would I die a thousand deaths than that my honour should be so sullied."

" The Viceroy of Naples, Sire," was the next timid suggestion.

"So let it be," said the monarch coldly; "he has, at least, not disgraced his own. To M. de Lannoy I may deliver it without shame."¹

This concession made, La Motte galloped back to the field to announce the surrender of the French king, and to summon the Neapolitan viceroy, not omitting to spread the welcome intelligence as he went, and to inquire for the Duc de Bourbon. Thus, only a brief time elapsed ere large bodies of men were on their way to the spot where Francis, still attended by Pompérant, and guarded by the six troopers, remained calmly awaiting their arrival. The first general who reached it was the Marquis del Guasto, who approached the monarch with an air of respectful deference, to which Francis replied with a courtesy as dignified as it was frank, immediately addressing him by name, and expressing a hope that he had escaped unhurt. The immediate care of the marquis was to disperse the crowd of soldiers who were rapidly collecting about the person of the king; after which he resumed his position a little in the

¹ "Et là je fuz longuement combattu,
Et mon cheval mort soubz moy abattu.

De toutes pars lors despouillé je fuz,
Mays deffendre n'y servit ne reffuz.

Bien me trouva en ce piteux arroy,
Exécutant leur chef le viceroy.
Quand il me vit, il descendit sans faille,
Affin qu'ayde à ce besoing ne faille.
Las ! que diray ? Cela ne veulz nyer,
Vaincu je fuz et rendu prisonnier."

"Epistre de François sur l'expédition d'Italie et la bataille de Pavie, dans *Captivités*," p. 123-124.

rear on his right hand, and, after the hesitation of a moment, Francis, with a faint smile and a steady voice, again spoke.

"I have one favour to claim at your hands, M. del Guasto," he said. "Fortune has favoured your master, and I must submit; but I would fain pray you not to conduct me to Pavia. I could ill brook to be made a spectacle to the citizens who have suffered so much at my hands. Allow me to become, for a time at least, your own guest."

"I am at the orders of your majesty, and deeply sensible of the honour that is conferred upon me," replied the favourite of Charles. A fresh horse was then led forward, the stirrup was held by Del Guasto bareheaded, and Francis once more mounted, and, escorted by the troop of the Spanish general, traversed the camp in order to reach the quarters of his new host.

Medical aid was instantly procured, his wounds were dressed, and it was discovered that, in addition to the hurts which he had received, his cuirass was indented in several places by balls, one of which had been so well aimed, and had entered so deeply into the metal, that his life had only been preserved by a relic which he wore suspended from a gold chain about his neck, and against which the force of the ball had expended itself.

The operations of the surgeons were scarcely completed ere the Marquis de Pescara entered the tent, who saluted the king coldly but respectfully; and he was shortly followed by Lannoy, to whom

Francis, with the mien rather of a conqueror than a captive, at once tendered his sword. The viceroy bent his knee as he received it, and having deferentially kissed the hand by which it was tendered, immediately presented the king with another weapon. The next general who appeared was Bourbon, still in complete armour with his visor closed, and carrying his reeking sword unsheathed in his hand. As he approached, the king inquired his name, to which Pescara replied that it was Charles of Bourbon; upon which Francis stepped a pace backward, as if to avoid his contact; and Pescara, advancing at the same moment, demanded the duke's sword. Bourbon at once delivered it up, and then raising his visor, cast himself upon his knees before Francis, and humbly craved permission to kiss the royal hand. The indignant monarch coldly and proudly refused to receive this act of homage; and his scorn so deeply wounded the ex-connétable, that he exclaimed bitterly and almost reproachfully, "Ah, Sire, had you but followed my advice you had never been here and thus; nor so much of the best blood of France reeking upon the plains of Italy!"

For a moment Francis fixed his eyes sternly upon the prostrate figure before him, and then raising them to heaven, he said impatiently, "Patience—only grant me patience, since fortune has deserted me——"

This trying interview was terminated by Pescara, who intimated to the king that he must within an hour hold himself in readiness to mount, as he should

have the honour of escorting him to Pavia before nightfall. The lip of the monarch quivered for a second, and his cheek blanched, but he was too proud to reiterate a request which had been disregarded ; and the imperialist generals had no sooner withdrawn than he occupied himself in writing to his mother the celebrated letter which has been so often declared to have consisted only of the brief and emphatic sentence, " Madame, tout est perdu fors l'honneur ;" but which Sismondi affirms, on the authority of a MS. chronicle of Nicaise Ladam, king-at-arms of Charles V., and the parliamentary registers of the 10th November, to have been as wordy and diffuse as his ordinary epistles ; and to have merely contained a version of the phrase of which some modern historians have represented it entirely to consist.

Lescun, who was mortally wounded, but still survived, exhausted his slender remains of strength in seeking to encounter Bonnavet, to whose evil influence he justly attributed the disasters of his country ; and Bourbon, smarting under a new and bitter mortification which he was anxious to avenge upon its original author, was similarly occupied for a considerable time. The search of Lescun was terminated by utter exhaustion, and he was lifted from his horse covered with blood, and conveyed to Pavia to die. Bourbon was more successful, although his intention was frustrated, for he at length discovered the favourite stretched upon the field stark and stiff, and completely riddled with wounds. The handsomest and vainest noble of France lay a mangled

corpse before him ; and as, after a lengthened gaze, he turned aside, he murmured less in anger than in pity, " Miserable man ! It is to you that both France and myself owe our ruin."

Well might he utter those fearful words, for the battle of Pavia had not only cost the liberty of the French monarch, but had overwhelmed his kingdom with grief and mourning. Among those who fell were the Maréchal de Chabannes, M. de la Tremouille, Bonnivet himself, the Bastard of Savoie, who, although he survived the engagement for a few days, ultimately died of his wounds ; Galéaz de Saint Sévérino, the Duc de Lorraine, the Duke of Suffolk, the Comte de Tonnerre, the Seigneur de Chaumont, Bussy d'Amboise, and many others of high rank ; while the prisoners taken by the imperialists were still more numerous and of equal reputation. Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, was the captive of Pescara himself, who, aware of the importance of his prisoner to the emperor, who coveted his kingdom, refused every offer of ransom ; a pertinacity which determined the young monarch to attempt his escape—an endeavour in which he was fortunately successful. The Comte de St. Pol was equally happy. Having fainted from loss of blood upon the field, he was believed to have expired, but was restored to consciousness by the agony occasioned by the violence of a soldier, who, in passing, was attracted by the glitter of a valuable jewel that he wore upon his hand, and being unable to withdraw it, proceeded to cut off the finger which it encircled. Startled by the

effect of his barbarity, the man at length yielded to the entreaties and promises of the Count, and conveyed him in safety to Pavia, whence, on his restoration to health, he accompanied him to France ; but more than a score of the highest nobility of the country remained prisoners to the enemy.

From the moment in which it was ascertained that the king was taken, the French troops offered no further resistance, but many were slaughtered during the succeeding two hours ; and numbers of fugitives, dreading a similar fate, attempted to escape by swimming across the Ticino, where they all perished miserably. The disproportion in the aggregate loss of the several armies appears nevertheless incredible ; for it is asserted that while that of the French amounted to eight thousand men, the imperialists did not lose more than seven hundred ; while they were so anxious to secure their prisoners, and to possess themselves of the enormous booty which had fallen into their hands, that they remained a sufficient time upon the field to secure the flight of the Comte de Clermont, and to enable him to destroy the bridges over which he passed on his way through Piedmont ; to permit Teodoro Trivulzio to evacuate Milan, and make good his retreat by Lago Maggiore ; and to render it practicable for the French to evacuate Lombardy altogether.

The capture of Francis caused a powerful sensation in the imperialist camp. The enthusiasm of the soldiers knew no bounds ; and their admiration of the royal prisoner became at length so demonstrative that,

under the pretence of their presence and acclamations harassing the king, Lannoy forbade them to approach his tent. They had overlooked his defeat at Pavia, and remembered only his victory at Marignano. From the camp Francis was transferred to the citadel of Pizzighittona, and he had scarcely arrived there when Bourbon solicited an interview. Too proud to shrink from the encounter, painful as it was, the king offered no objection ; but the duke had no sooner appeared upon the threshold of his apartment than he exclaimed reproachfully, "Are you then so proud of a victory which has ruined those who are nearest and dearest to you, M. de Bourbon?"

"Sire," replied the ex-connétable respectfully but firmly, "I beseech your majesty not to reproach me with a defection of which I should never have been guilty had not the animosity of others compelled me to it."

The king made an impatient gesture, but a shade passed over his brow ; and as he was about to seat himself at table, where he had insisted upon the companionship of the Marquis de Pescara, Bourbon approached him deferentially and tendered to him the finger-napkin as he had formerly done at Amboise. The king looked him earnestly in the face for a moment, and then, slightly bending his head, received it without comment. Monarch as he was, he felt their relative position, and was too proud to contend against his conquerer. With a frankness and courage which did him honour, he discussed with Pescara all the details of the late battle ; declar-

ing that he did not regret the effort which he had made to secure his claims, and that had all his own army fought at Pavia like the marquis and his Basques he should inevitably have gained the day. He spoke bitterly, however, of the defalcation of the Swiss and Italians ; asserting that the military reputation of the former was irretrievably lost ; while the latter were simply soldiers of parade, unequal to anything beyond the mere pageantry of war. Of himself he said nothing ; he had been worsted, and he felt that all comments upon the past were idle ; but during the whole of the repast he discussed the subject as calmly, and with as much apparent indifference, as though his own interests had not been involved in its result.

When he arose from table he addressed Pompérant, who had come in the train of M. de Bourbon, with unaffected warmth. " To you, sir," he said, " I owe, if not my life, at least my escape from insult and outrage. You have, I feel, acted upon principle, however it may have misled you, and henceforth the past shall be forgotten."

Before Pescara withdrew he assured the king that the emperor his master would take no ungenerous advantage of his success, and pledged himself to exert all the interest of which he was personally possessed to ensure his speedy liberation upon terms consistent with his high dignity ; and meanwhile he was consigned to the custody of M. d'Alarçon, who had succeeded Prosper Colonna in the command of the Spanish infantry.

By a fortunate chance it happened that one of the Spanish soldiers appointed to the night guard of the king on the evening of his arrival at Pizzighittona had captured a French gendarme, and being fearful of the escape of his prisoner should he entrust him to the custody of a comrade, he had introduced him into the guardroom, where he could keep an eye upon his movements. This gentleman, aware that the valets and other attendants of the monarch had, in their anxiety to secure their own safety, abandoned their duty, entreated his captor to permit him to offer his services to his royal master; representing the impossibility of his making an undue use of the privilege, and pledging himself to return when he had fulfilled his duty. To this proposition, after some demur, the Spaniard at length acceded; and with considerable diffidence the young volunteer presented himself before the monarch, and tendered his assistance in his arrangements for the night. Francis instantly perceived that the intruder was a Frenchman; and as he paused upon the threshold of the chamber, exclaimed hastily—

“Before you enter, who are you, sir?”

“I am one of the subjects of your majesty,” was the reply; “Antoine des Prés, Seigneur de Montpezat, gentilhomme de Quercy, a man-at-arms in the company of the Maréchal de Foix; and am the prisoner of one of your guards.”

“I thank you, sir,” said the king; “but before I avail myself of your well-timed services summon your captor to my presence.”

When the Spaniard made his appearance Francis inquired the amount of ransom he required for his prisoner, which, from the fact of Montpezat being a simple soldier, was necessarily trifling, the worthy Iberian little suspecting that he was at that moment founding the fortunes of a future marshal of France.

"It is well," said the monarch; "give him his liberty; I will be answerable not only for the sum you name, but for an increase of a hundred crowns, the whole of which you shall receive ere long."

The man bowed and retired, overwhelmed with delight at his good fortune; while M. de Montpezat, still more bewildered by this sudden change in his destiny, remained in close attendance upon his sovereign, and soon won his regard and confidence.

Ere long, weary of a confinement so repugnant to his pride, Francis solicited permission to transmit a letter to the emperor, in which he entreated him to decide upon his future destiny, and threw himself upon his generosity in a style of supplication certainly not accordant with his kingly rank, and which, there can be little doubt, from the nature of Charles's disposition, and the bitter enmity he bore towards his worsted enemy, afforded him a triumph second only to his capture.

He nevertheless affected to receive the intelligence of his unhopèd-for success with the most pious humility; and after having read the despatches in the midst of his Court, retired to his oratory, where he remained a considerable time in prayer; finally forbidding all public demonstrations of rejoicing, and

declaring that his only feeling of exultation arose from the conviction that he should now have leisure and opportunity to undertake a crusade against the Infidels, by whom the holy faith of Christendom was endangered.

Charles was too refined a hypocrite to betray his real feelings to the world.

CHAPTER VII

1525

Results of the battle of Pavia—Anguish of Louise de Savoie—Indignation of Marguerite de Valois—Annihilation of the French army—Discontent of the people—Last interview of the Duke and Duchesse d'Alençon—Death of the duke—The princes of the blood—Unpopularity of the regent—Her efforts to gain the confidence of the citizens—Excitement in Paris—Recal of the troops from Italy—Insurrection of the German reformers—They are dispersed by the Comte de Guise—Requisition of the Parliament—Louise de Savoie persecutes the Lutherans—Energy of Marguerite de Valois in their behalf—Her isolation at Court—Exile of Madame de Châteaubriand and Diane de Poitiers—Vengeance of the Comte de Châteaubriand—The regent endeavours to conciliate the European Powers—Coolness between France and England—Demands of Henry VIII.—Craft of Charles V.—Henry VIII. signs a new treaty with France—Oppression of Italy by the imperial army—Charles concludes a truce with France—The ransom of Francis discussed in the emperor's council—Treachery of Louise de Savoie—Alarm of the imperialist generals—Crooked policy of De Lannoy—The emperor's envoy—Francis rejects the proposed conditions for his liberty—Consents to proceed to Spain—Intrigue of De Lannoy—The king embarks—Indignation of Bourbon and Pescara—Francis arrives in Spain—Mutiny in the royal guard—Suppressed by the king—Exultation of Charles V.—Francis is conducted to Madrid and imprisoned in the Alcazar—Indignities offered to the royal captive—Bourbon follows the king to Madrid—Expostulations of Bourbon and Pescara—Mortifications of Bourbon—Intrigue of Jeronio Morone—The secret league—The offered crown—Pescara betrays his friends—Duplicity of Clement VII. and Louise de Savoie—A sobriquet—Double dealing—Misplaced confidence—Arrest of Morone—Dissolution of the league—Death of Pescara—Arrival of Madame d'Alençon in Spain—She visits her brother—Her distrust of Charles V.—Her audience—False faith of the emperor—Spirited remonstrances of the duchess—Her failure—She endeavours to effect the escape of Francis—A household quarrel—The treacherous attendant—The flight prevented—Increased hardships of the French king—The emperor meditates the arrest of the princess—She is warned by Bourbon and escapes.

THE position of the French kingdom, when the disastrous intelligence of the defeat at Pavia reached

its shores, was perilous in the extreme. Louise de Savoie, who, from the first, foreboded an evil issue to the hazardous enterprize of her son, had removed to Lyons in order to be early apprized of the operations in Italy; but, self-possessed as she was, she no sooner learnt the captivity of Francis than, throwing down the despatches, she wrung her hands in agony, exclaiming—"Alas! he would not listen to my advice. He would not regard my warning. And yet I entreated him so earnestly not to commit this rashness."

"Madame," said Marguerite de Valois, who stood beside her, "the king is merely unfortunate, and must yet redeem himself. M. d'Alençon is dishonoured, and has now only to die."

But Madame d'Angoulême could find little consolation in such a conviction. Able as she was in the science of government, she had, nevertheless, suffered her passions to control her judgment, and she knew that the hearts of the French people were estranged from her. She had profited by the departure of her son to carry out many schemes of individual vengeance and favouritism; she had commenced a process against M. de Semblançay for an imaginary debt to herself, which he had resisted, and had consigned him to the Bastille, where he was then lingering out his days; she had permitted Duprat to pursue his system of extortion and tyranny; and now she beheld herself almost powerless, and beset by difficulty on every side. Not only was the king a captive, but the voice of

mourning was universal. The highest and noblest of the land had fallen ; and where she might otherwise have looked for sympathy, it was swallowed up in private sorrow. Even her high-souled daughter found the tears which she shed for her brother quenched by the burning blush of shame elicited by the cowardice of her husband—that husband who had been forced upon her by her now suffering mother. She might have gloried in the greatness of her brother even in his fall, but she shrank from the disgrace which had been drawn down upon herself.

The noblest army that France had ever sent forth was annihilated ; the nobility upon which she prided herself were decimated ; her hopes were gone ; her strength was paralysed. The treasury was exhausted, the population impoverished by taxation, and the destruction of the kingdom apparently inevitable. The moment was a critical one to Louise de Savoie ; for already murmurs arose among the people, who, weary of her rule, and despairing of the liberation of the monarch, began to discuss the claims of the several princes of the blood, and to demand another and a more efficient ruler. Many shouted the name of Bourbon, and accused the regent of his defalcation ; and had Henry VIII. at that crisis listened to the overtures of the rebel duke, and acceded to his demand for supplies and assistance, no doubt can exist that the crowns of France and England would have been united on his head. Henry, however, as we have

already shown, distrusted the ambition of Bourbon, and his representations were consequently disregarded.

The next in rank was the Duc d'Alençon, but his claims were soon silenced. As a fugitive, dishonoured and disowned, he entered France; and when he reached Lyons was confronted with his indignant wife, whose reproaches heaped coals of fire upon his head. He would have explained, remonstrated, and entreated; but Marguerite de Valois disdained to listen.

"You have saved your life, sir," she said with cutting irony; "*your life!*—which must hereafter be a reproach, as it has long been useless both to yourself and others. You left your king to die, or, more bitter still, to remain the captive of an enemy—and you wore a sword. Shame on you, sir! Shame on you that you were afraid to use it! Had I been in your place I would have saved you this disgrace, but all that I can now do is to refuse to share it. Do not mistake my tears; they do not fall for you, but for myself. I am compelled to bear your name, while my heart loathes it; but that is all the union which from this hour can exist between us. Even as you forsook my gallant brother in his hour of need, do I forsake you in my turn. Henceforth we are strangers to each other."

In another month the Duc d'Alençon was in his grave.¹

¹ Mr. Walter K. Kelly, author of the *Memoirs of Margaret, Queen of Navarre*, prefixed to Bohn's edition of the *Heptameron* (1855),

The third prince of the blood was M. de Vendôme, then Governor of Picardy, who, although he had remained true to the royal cause, was nevertheless suspected of maintaining a correspondence with his cousin, the Duc de Bourbon ; but still the majority of the people, exasperated by the supremacy of Duprat, and the evil use which he had made of his influence over the regent, looked to Vendôme as their deliverer from utter ruin, and declared that the kingdom would be safer in his hands than in those of a foreign woman. Even sundry members of the parliament espoused his cause against Louise de Savoie, and pledged themselves to support his pretensions ; while the regent herself, aware of her utter incapacity to allay the popular discontent, was no sooner apprized of his arrival in France, after having entrusted his command in Picardy to M. de Brienne, than she appointed him president of the council. At this juncture she evinced, moreover, a judgment and decision which

says : " Historians have treated the memory of Margaret's first husband with excessive severity. He had the misfortune to escape unwounded from the fatal battle of Pavia, while endeavouring to save the remains of the routed army ; and it has been alleged that on his arrival at Lyons, where he found his wife and mother-in-law, he was received by them with the most contumelious reproaches, and that, unable to endure his shame and remorse, he died a few days after. That is not true. The battle of Pavia was fought on the 24th of February 1525, and the Duc d'Alençon did not die until the 11th of April. It appears, from the testimony of an eyewitness brought to light by the last editors of the *Heptameron*, that he was carried off by a pleurisy in five days ; that he was comforted on his deathbed by his wife and her mother ; that he spoke with profound regret of the king's misfortune, but that nothing escaped his own lips or those of the two ladies to indicate the faintest idea on either side that he had not done his duty at Pavia."

almost redeemed her previous errors. She convoked meetings of the princes of the blood, the governors of provinces, and other influential functionaries, with whom she discussed the necessary measures for the restoration of the monarch and the security of the kingdom; she also took active measures to regulate and protect the public finances; and, finally, she treated the parliament with a respect and deference to which they had long been unaccustomed.

The excitement in Paris was, nevertheless, fearful. On the first news of the king's captivity the parliament summoned the Archbishop of Aix, the governor of the capital, and the principal municipal officers, to devise measures for the safety of the city, when it was determined that only five of the gates should remain open, and that a constant guard should be maintained, in which the counsellors were to act in concert with the citizens. Chains were stretched across the river, while others were prepared to close the streets; and the veteran warrior Montmorency, whose two sons had fought at Pavia (where the elder still remained a prisoner), was summoned to Paris to take the command. The panic spread throughout the kingdom; all the principal towns followed the example given by the metropolis; public prayers were offered up for deliverance from an enemy whom each believed to be approaching; and the national terror was at its height. These pious orisons were, however, mingled, in the churches of the capital, with the denuncia-

tions which many of the preachers fulminated against the regent from their pulpits; while anonymous writings were scattered about the different thoroughfares, in which she and the chancellor were accused as the authors of the present misery, and the people were earnestly called upon to resist her authority.

The remnant of that splendid army with which Francis had so proudly taken the field was all the military force which now remained to France; and constant desertions had, even since the defeat at Pavia, considerably reduced its already inconsiderable numbers. The troops were, however, recalled without delay; but as they were unable to traverse Italy, owing to its occupation by the imperialists, galleys were despatched from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, under the command of Andrea Doria¹ and La Fayette, to facilitate their return. The first measure of the regent upon the arrival of the exhausted army was to pay off all their arrears, which at once secured their fidelity; and she wisely followed up this act of justice by ransoming such of the prisoners still re-

¹ Andrea Doria, born in 1468, at Oncilla, near Genoa, embraced the profession of arms, and entered the navy in the year 1492, where he distinguished himself against the Turks, the Moors, and the Levantine pirates. While in the service of Francis I. he defeated the fleet of Charles V. on the shores of Provence, and compelled the imperialists to raise the siege of Marseilles. To him France was also indebted for the reduction of Genoa in 1527. Worn out at length by the contempt of the French and the ungracious return made for his services, he passed over to the emperor; drove the French from Genoa, where he refused to accept the title of doge; defeated the Turks, whom he compelled to evacuate Hungary and Austria; and possessed himself of the island of Corsica. Towards the close of his life two several conspiracies were formed against him, both of which, however, failed; and he finally died at the advanced age of ninety-three years.

maining in the hands of the enemy as were unable to liberate themselves.

Meanwhile an insurrection which threatened to involve important consequences had broken out upon the German frontier, where a fanatical and disorderly body of fifteen thousand men had taken up arms and marched upon the provinces of Burgundy and Champagne. Under the pretext of protecting and enforcing the rights of the reformed religion, which in reality impressed upon them the necessity of "peace and goodwill towards men," they committed the most fearful outrages; insisting that the precepts of the Church should govern the national policy, and meanwhile disgracing the cause which they affected to uphold by every description of violence and excess. Their career was, however, speedily terminated by the energy of the Comte de Guise, who, having raised a force of six thousand men, gave them battle, and so entirely routed their army, most of whom perished in the engagement, that they were unable to rally or to effect a second demonstration.

The result of this gallant enterprize tended greatly to allay the national panic, and many who had before utterly despaired began to form brighter hopes of the future; but the promptitude and even the success of M. de Guise excited the indignation of the regent, who reproached him bitterly for having withdrawn from the capital the troops by which it was protected. By the Parliament, however, the signal service which he had rendered to his country was fully estimated; nor did they hesitate (when

Louise de Savoie despatched two of her counsellors to declare to them that the king had expressed his pleasure that she should take up her abode in the capital with his children) to declare that all the misfortunes which had recently occurred had been brought upon the kingdom by the indulgence that had been shown to the Lutherans, whose utter extermination they required at her hands ; they also subjoined other demands, such as the abolition of financial abuses, impossible to be accorded at a moment when the exigencies of the kingdom were necessarily augmented by its unhappy position. Madame d'Angoulême consequently temporized with the parliament by pledging herself to persecute the unfortunate reformers ; and as an earnest of her sincerity caused a learned man named Jacques Pavanes, who had been invited from his own province of Bourbonnais to Meaux by the bishop of that place in consequence of his great attainments, to be arrested ; and having put him upon his trial as a Lutheran convert, she suffered him to be burned alive in the Place de Grève. A second execution shortly followed, of which the victim was a reformer known as the Hermit of Livry, who underwent the same appalling sentence in front of the cathedral of Nôtre Dame, the great bell tolling throughout the whole period of the tragedy in order to assemble the people to the hideous spectacle. The firmness and piety with which the holy martyr endured his dying agonies were, however, so remarkable, that it is probable the effect produced upon the

witnesses was very different from that which had been desired.

The anguish of mind endured during these frightful enormities by the Duchesse d'Alençon was unbounded. Even her anxiety for her absent brother, and her mortification at the pusillanimity of her husband, were for a time forgotten. From the year 1523, when the persecution of the Lutherans commenced, she had openly declared herself, if not their convert, at least their advocate. Her efforts in their favour had been unceasing; and on several occasions she had incurred the displeasure of the king by her persevering remonstrances. So determined, indeed, was she to protect, in so far as she was able, those who were suffering for their adherence to the new faith, that she resented as a personal insult the arrest of her *valet-de-chambre*, Clement Marot the poet, who, having been convicted of eating meat during Lent, had been committed to prison; and in defiance of the Sorbonne and the inquisitor himself, she insisted upon his release. It may therefore be imagined with what bitter sorrow she was compelled to witness the frightful acts of cruelty, which, instigated as they were by mere considerations of state policy, were nevertheless attributed to religious zeal. By her secret but efficient aid the celebrated Guillaume Farel was enabled to escape to Geneva, where he became a powerful preacher; and Jacques Fabri, one of the most learned doctors of the Sorbonne, who had also embraced the reformed faith, was preserved from the flames and ultimately pardoned.

While, however, she exulted in the partial success which crowned her righteous efforts, she had still only too much cause for grief. A great and undisguised coldness had grown up between herself and her mother, who resented her interference ; and she had no longer about her person those friends and counsellors in whom she might have found consolation. Bourbon, the only man whom she had ever loved, was an attainted rebel in arms against his country. De Semblançay, for whom, like Francis himself, she had a strong affection, was a prisoner in the Bastille ; and one of the regent's first acts of power had been to banish from the Court her two chosen companions, Madame de Châteaubriand and Diane de Poitiers. To the first of these ladies, Marguerite de Valois, who was, as we have already stated, singularly indulgent to the frailties of her sex, particularly where the weakness ministered to the pleasures of her brother, was tenderly attached ; and aware as she was of the violent character of the injured husband to whose guardianship the countess had been consigned by Madame d'Angoulême on her dismissal from the Court, her mind was filled with the most gloomy forebodings.

These, as the result proved, were by no means unreasonable ; for while the aged and solitary Louis de Brézé received back his young and lovely wife, of whose fidelity he had rather feared than doubted, with a warm welcome which might have tended to arrest her in a career of profligacy, M. de Châteaubriand, on the contrary, greeted his guilty consort

with the most bitter reproaches. Regardless alike of her tears and her attempts at explanation, he overwhelmed her with insult, reminding her that if he afforded the shelter of his roof to the mistress of the king, he merely accorded refuge to a criminal and not a home to a wife. This change of position was so sudden and so violent that, whatever had been the misgivings of the countess during her enforced journey, the reality so far outran her anticipations that, guilty as she was, she writhed beneath the intemperate passion of her offended husband, and the extremity of her terror lent her strength.

"You are mad, sir," she said indignantly; "I am but what you yourself have made me. Young and ignorant of the world, you summoned me to a Court where I was beset by temptations, and where you abandoned me to my fate. Your own cruelty and injustice forced me to dishonour; and now you seek to visit upon me the consequences of your imprudence. In obedience to your commands I left my home, and in accordance with those of the king I remained at Court. The result you must have foreseen."

"Madame," retorted the count indignantly, "you know the falsehood of your assertion. Learn also that you are infamous, not only in my eyes, but in those of the whole nation."

"Enough, sir, enough!" exclaimed the trembling woman, as she buried her face in her hands—"you follow up one cowardice by another, and have courage to avenge what you designate your wounded

honour only when you know that I am defenceless."

"It is a lesson taught me by yourself" was the bitter retort; "the protection of a monarch rendered you indifferent to the wrongs of a husband; but Providence is just, and you have no longer that monarch at your side to dispute my claims. We will not, however, waste more words upon a subject too hateful for discussion. Your apartments are prepared, and you must allow me to act as your usher."

As he ceased speaking he extended his hand, and the countess, still more anxious than himself to terminate so painful an interview, placed her own within it, and suffered him to lead her from the room. At the end of a long gallery he paused, and throwing back the door of a sequestered chamber, desired her to enter. On the threshold she paused with a cry of terror, and would have retreated, but it was already too late. The count forcibly drew her forward, and she found herself in a spacious apartment hung with black serge, in which the whole furniture consisted of a curtainless bed, a wooden chair, and a small statue of the Magdalen affixed to the wall; while, as if to deepen the gloom of this repelling prison, all the windows had been carefully closed, and the only light by which it was illumined was dimly admitted through a skylight constructed in the roof. Such was the new abode of the royal favourite—of the proud mistress who had dared a rivalry of power with the mother of her sovereign—

of the minion of fortune who had long taught herself to forget the disgraceful price at which she had purchased her supremacy, and who had been accustomed to see the proudest nobles of a brilliant Court at her feet. She was alone—alone with her brightest and her most bitter memories. She had no resource save the agonizing one of thought; for the companionship of the child whom she had wilfully abandoned she did not dare to ask; the attendance which was accorded to her was limited, and rendered in silence; her only nourishment the felon's meal of bread and water; and, meanwhile, she knew that he who had once idolized her was beneath the same roof; that there was life and movement about her while she was shut out alike from all sight and sound of her fellow-beings, save for a few brief instants daily; and that he who might, and, as she fondly believed, would have avenged her, was a captive in a distant land, as powerless, if not as wretched, as herself.

The persecution of the Lutherans, active as it was, did not suffice to occupy the whole attention of the regent, who made the most energetic efforts to propitiate all the European potentates whose influence might conduce to the liberation of her son; nor did she omit a strenuous attempt to conciliate the emperor himself, whose apparent moderation and unostentatious humility deceived even her sagacity; while she laboured at the same time to produce a misunderstanding between such of the powers as were avowedly the enemies of France.

Circumstances had combined to aid her policy upon this point ; for, even before the battle of Pavia, a coldness had arisen between Henry VIII. and Charles, to which the kingdom of Francis in all probability owed its integral preservation. It is at least certain that had the English monarch maintained his alliance with the emperor, and attacked the French forces in Picardy during their reverses beyond the Alps, the exhausted and helpless position of the country must have rendered its conquest an easy one ; but Wolsey had at length lost all faith in the specious and hollow promises of Charles, and considered himself personally aggrieved ; while Henry resented the insult offered to his daughter, to whom the emperor, as we have already stated, had betrothed himself, by the fact that that potentate had recently demanded the hand of Isabella of Portugal, wilfully overlooking the fact that he had, on his side, endeavoured to effect an alliance between the affianced Princess Mary and the King of Scotland. Both sovereigns had moreover failed to observe the treaty by which they were pledged to a simultaneous invasion of the French territories ; and each, forgetful or careless of his own failure, was loud in condemning that of his ally.

Under these circumstances the English king replied to the communication of the emperor, which conveyed to him the intelligence of the victory of Pavia, by advancing claims which were well calculated to produce a rupture between the two countries. He insisted that Charles should not enter into any

treaty with Francis which did not favour his own pretensions to the French crown; that he should immediately march his army into the French territories; and that the person of the captive monarch should be delivered into his own custody, in accordance with a clause in the treaty into which they had severally entered, and by which each sovereign bound himself to deliver over to his ally any prince taken in rebellion against the opposite party.

To demands of so arrogant a nature as these he had, of course, never anticipated that the victorious emperor would accede; but Charles was, nevertheless, too wary to express his sense of their presumption. His reply was guarded and evasive; and Henry, impatient of a policy whose results could never be anticipated, at length invited Madame d'Angoulême to despatch ambassadors to his Court with whom he might negotiate. Accordingly two plenipotentiaries were appointed, entrusted with full powers to effect a defensive alliance between France and England; and instructed, if possible, to detach Henry at any price from the interests of Charles. Predisposed to a change of policy, the English king readily listened to their arguments; alienated himself from the cause of the emperor; and finally, on the 30th of August (1525), signed a new treaty of alliance with Francis, wherein the latter acknowledged himself the debtor of the English king in the sum of two millions of golden crowns, which he engaged to pay within twenty years, at the rate of a hundred thousand crowns yearly; and the arrears of income due to the



Thomas Kempe

Thomas Kempe

Thomas Kempe of Charles V

THOMAS KEMPE OF CHARLES V

FROM THE IMPERIAL COLLECTION, LOWER BELVIDERE, VIENNA



dowager-queen, the widow of Louis XII., were at the same time regulated.

While these measures were in operation the Italian states were overrun by the victorious army of Charles, and were suffering all the horrors of foreign domination. Intoxicated by success, demoralized by relaxed discipline, destitute of pecuniary resources, and rendered arrogant by impunity, the imperialist troops had become the scourge of the whole country. They had exacted heavy sums from the Duke of Ferrara and the republic of Lucca, and even demanded fresh supplies from the Pope and the Venetians; while their principal officers did not hesitate openly to declare the resolution of the emperor to possess himself of the whole of Italy. In this emergency the Venetians despatched an ambassador to England, who was instructed to impress upon Henry VIII. the necessity of preserving the equilibrium of Europe; and the Pope, anxious to protect himself against the threatened aggression, caused his apostolical datary to write to his nuncio in London, instructing him to join in the league.

This circumstance decided the measures of Charles, who ultimately replied to the envoys of Louise de Savoie by conceding a truce of six months, which were to be devoted to the negotiations for the liberation of Francis; of which the terms were forthwith debated in the imperial councils. With a moderation and generosity which did credit to his sacred profession, the Bishop of Osma¹ suggested that the

¹ The confessor of the emperor.

captive monarch should be at once restored to liberty on the sole condition of his marrying the widowed queen, Eleonora, whose hand had been promised to Bourbon ; a step by which the emperor would secure a firm ally and win the admiration of all Europe. But this advice suited neither the vindictiveness of Charles nor the jealousy of his friends, and was at once overruled. The imperial chancellor then voted for the perpetual imprisonment of the unfortunate young king ; a measure by which the emperor would definitively rid himself of a dangerous enemy, and be enabled to undertake his crusade against the Turks without a rival to his glory. This suggestion, however, flattering as was the prospect so skilfully held out, by no means satisfied such of the council as were anxious for the degradation of France ; and, finally, the advice of the Duke of Alva¹ was adopted, which was to demand an enormous sum as the personal ransom of Francis ; and, moreover, to exact conditions of a nature so rigorous as to cripple his power, impoverish his resources, and recruit the exhausted finances of the empire.

While these deliberations were proceeding Louise

¹ Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, was the representative of an illustrious Spanish family. He gained for Charles V. (in 1547) the battle of Muhlberg against the Elector of Saxony, and was appointed Governor of Milan in 1555. Philip II. made him, in the following year, the Governor of the Low Countries, which revolted against his despotism and cruelty. He consequently resigned his charge in 1573, and died nine years subsequently at the advanced age of eighty. He had caused during his career the execution of 18,000 individuals ; and excited a war which lasted throughout sixty-eight years, cost Spain eight hundred millions of crowns, and finally deprived her of seven Flemish provinces.

de Savoie was not idle, but endeavoured to ingratiate herself with the emperor by betraying the allies whom she had seduced by her promises. She was anxious to inspire him with apprehensions for the safety of Italy, trusting that by this treacherous policy she might compel more favourable terms for the ransom of her son. Once more, however, she was deluded by her hopes, for Charles was even better informed than herself of the events which were in progress, and so well aware of the importance of the advantage he had gained that, although he did not scruple to avail himself of her bad faith, and even courteously to acknowledge his sense of the obligation, he never wavered for an instant in his intentions.

His generals in Italy were, however, less confident than himself. The old jealousies had been revived ; their three chiefs no longer acted in unison ; the soldiers mutinied for their arrears of pay ; the Italians were ripe for revolt against their oppressors, and there was reason to apprehend that they would attempt to effect the liberation of the still unransomed prisoners. A double guard, commanded by Pescara and Bourbon, was consequently placed about the person of the French king, and every precaution taken to prevent a surprise ; but Francis had near his person a more insidious enemy than either the rebel duke or the Spanish general. Lannoy, the favourite of Charles, who, however inferior to both in military talent, far exceeded them in subtlety, aware that the royal captive could never be wholly

in the power of his conqueror until within the Spanish frontier, had resolved to effect his removal without the knowledge of his unsuspecting colleagues ; and he constantly laboured to impress upon Francis the great advantage which must accrue from his evincing a perfect confidence in the emperor, and soliciting a removal to Madrid, where they might personally confer together.

Weary of his dreary prison at Pizzighittona, and thirsting for some relief to the monotony of his existence, the young king listened readily to the specious representations and arguments of his false adviser ; and he was yet wavering when the arrival of M. de Beaurain, Seigneur de Rœux,¹ was announced to him, with despatches from the emperor. The envoy was at once admitted, and with a hasty gesture Francis tore open the packet ; but the hot blood rushed to his cheek as he examined its contents, and he had no sooner ceased reading than he drew his dagger from its sheath, and vehemently exclaimed that he would sooner meet death from his own hand than submit to conditions which involved the degradation and ruin of his kingdom.

M. d'Alarçon, who was present at the interview, alarmed by the passionate attitude of his prisoner, and apprehensive that in the first burst of his indignation he might carry his threat into execution,

¹ M. de Rœux was the cup-bearer of the emperor, and a man of considerable military reputation, who had risen to high rank through the influence of his imperial master. His hatred to the French nation was intense, and he was accustomed to declare that he considered every moment lost in which he was not engaged against them. He was ultimately made prisoner before Naples by Filippo Doria.

seized his arm and besought him to calm himself; but it was long ere the unfortunate monarch could be appeased; and as he hurriedly paced the apartment he repeated bitterly and incessantly the terms proposed by the emperor. They were, indeed, crushing alike to his hopes as an individual and to his dignity as a sovereign, and such as Charles could never anticipate would be accepted. He required of Francis to cede his claims upon both Naples and Milan, to relinquish the duchy of Burgundy and his sovereignty over Flanders and Artois, to effect a reconciliation with the Duc de Bourbon, and to detach in his favour from the crown of France the whole of Provence and the other territories formerly possessed by the ex-connétable, which were to form a separate kingdom under that prince; and, finally, to make full compensation for all the claims of the King of England upon the emperor.

Deluded as he had been by the apparent moderation of Charles into the belief that his liberation would have entailed no ruin upon his country, the disappointment and mortification of Francis amounted to despair, and it was only after having vented the agony of his spirit that he could command sufficient self-possession to make the reply for which the envoy still waited; but at length he paused, and said coldly and proudly—

“I will not detain you longer, sir. Return to the emperor your master, and tell him that never, so long as I have life, will I submit to the degradation of complying with such conditions as those of which

you have been the bearer. Here is my final and irrevocable answer. I will accept the hand of the queen his sister ; and I will bestow upon the Duc de Bourbon that of the Duchesse d'Alençon, restoring to him upon his marriage all his former possessions. I will, moreover, discharge the engagements of the emperor with the King of England, pay a heavy personal ransom, and furnish troops when he shall proceed to Rome for his coronation. More than this I will not concede, though I remain a prisoner till the day of doom."

At his next interview with M. de Lannoy, Francis inveighed bitterly against the insult which had been offered to him by Charles ; and the viceroy seized so favourable an opportunity to urge the acceptance of the proposition which he had already submitted to the royal prisoner, that he should at once proceed to Spain, and treat personally with the emperor, assuring him that when all extraneous influence was removed, a treaty satisfactory to both parties would soon be accomplished.

At once sanguine and confiding, Francis readily fell into the snare ; but Lannoy had still many difficulties to overcome. In order to reach Spain it was necessary to cross a sea upon which the fleet of Andrea Doria and the galleys of La Fayette were greatly superior both in strength and numbers to the navy of the emperor, while De Lannoy was equally reluctant to trust his prisoner within the walls of Marseilles lest he should be liberated by the people. He had, therefore, no alternative but to extract a pledge from Francis that he would not avail himself

of any such attempt, but proceed in his custody to Spain, whatever demonstrations might be made by his subjects. The pledge was given, bitter as it must have been to the high-hearted young monarch ; and the wily viceroy had subsequently little difficulty in persuading him to despatch Montmorency (who still remained a prisoner) to the regent, with instructions to forward six of his galleys as hostages to Genoa, and to disarm the remainder. The *maréchal* departed on his ill-omened errand, and the next step taken by De Lannoy was to induce his two colleagues to remove the king from Pizzighittona to Genoa, under the guard of M. d'Alarçon, as to a place of greater safety.

Unsuspicious of his purpose, and anxious to ensure the safe keeping of their prisoner, both Bourbon and Pescara were easily persuaded to adopt this apparently politic measure ; and, accordingly, towards the end of May, the king left the fortress under an escort of three hundred lances and four thousand infantry. He had not long reached Genoa, however, ere De Lannoy suddenly effected his embarkation, announcing his intention of conveying him to Naples, in which direction he steered until he encountered the six French galleys which he was to detain as hostages, under the guard of Spanish soldiers ; but having seen these troops on board the several French vessels, he once more set sail, on the 7th of June, for Spain, where, at the termination of the voyage, he deposited his prisoner in the fortress of Xativa, in Valentia.

Only a few days subsequent to their landing a tumult broke out in the royal guard, who clamoured for their arrears of pay, and uttered such threats against De Lannoy, that in order to secure his personal safety he was compelled to make his escape over the roofs of the adjacent houses; while the troops, exasperated by his apparent disregard of their claims, discharged their firearms at the windows, and narrowly escaped wounding the king, several of the balls having entered the apartment which he occupied. Undismayed by the danger, Francis at once approached a window, and with firm and dignified affability expostulated with the mutineers, scattering some money among them, and representing the dangerous result of such a demonstration to themselves. Had he, observes Brantôme, taken advantage of their enthusiasm at that moment, he might in all probability have induced them to make sail with him to France; but, tempting as the opportunity undoubtedly was, Francis had pledged his royal word to De Lannoy that he would make no attempt at flight; and this consideration alone must have caused him to reject the project even had it occurred to him.

Nothing could exceed the exultation of Charles when he ascertained that his defeated rival was safely lodged in a Spanish fortress, and entirely in his power; for, although he affected the greatest sympathy in his misfortunes, and strictly forbade any public rejoicings at his own success, the honours and rewards which he lavished upon De Lannoy were

sufficient evidence of his real feelings. He immediately despatched an order to the viceroy to proceed to Madrid with his prisoner ; but instead of receiving him in person, as had been anticipated by Francis, he remained at Toledo, as if unconscious of his arrival in his dominions. Nor was this mortification lessened by the fact that instead of the honourable treatment which he had been led to expect he found himself a close prisoner, constantly attended by M. d'Alarçon, and only permitted to leave the castle occasionally for exercise, mounted upon a sluggish mule, and surrounded by an armed guard. The treachery of De Lannoy could no longer be doubted, and while the arrogant viceroy was reaping the rich reward of his double-dealing, the unhappy monarch found himself the dupe of his own overweening confidence.

Exhausted by disappointment, self-upbraiding, and regret ; wounded in his pride, outraged in his dignity, and deceived on every side, the spirit of Francis at length gave way, and he became seriously indisposed. Seven months of weariness and restraint had already passed, and he had never once had an interview with the emperor ; while so closely was he watched that he could not utter a word or receive a communication which was not overheard and registered. The strength of the old castle in which he was confined might have appeared a sufficient guarantee for his safety, but it was evident that every precaution and constraint which could add to his annoyance were industriously superadded. None had

access to him save by the sanction of the emperor himself, and every pretext was seized for withholding it. Every one who approached him was a spy, and his requests were met with a cold indifference which compelled him to keep silence.

The agony of mind endured by the Duchesse d'Alençon during this period was intense. She had actively urged forward the negotiations for his release, and more than once flattered herself that the termination of his captivity was at hand ; but Charles V. never failed to find some excuse for delay, and as communication between the two countries had been rendered extremely difficult by the jealous policy of the emperor, it was at last almost by accident that the intelligence of the king's illness was made known in France.

The first rumour which reached the Court was that of his death, and for several days the most fearful uncertainty prevailed ; but eventually the truth was ascertained, and Marguerite de Valois was no sooner assured that he still lived than she applied for a safe-conduct and permission to reside in Spain during two months. In vain was she reminded of the bad faith of Charles, and of the probability of his being unable to resist the temptation of securing another prisoner of such importance, and thus increasing his already extortionate demands of ransom ; no argument could withhold her. Since the disgrace of her husband she had lived only in her brother—the life of that idolized brother was in peril—and with the heroism of a true woman she did not suffer

one thought of self to militate against her purpose. Thus the guarantee which she had asked was no sooner reluctantly conceded than she made instant preparations for commencing her journey. Before she could reach Madrid, however, the low fever which was consuming the king had increased to so alarming a degree that the physicians who were in attendance upon him ventured to announce to the emperor that, unless some means were adopted to arouse him from the lethargy into which he was rapidly sinking, it would be impossible to save his life.

This report greatly alarmed the selfish Charles, who, however little interest he had shown in his captive, was keenly alive to the enormous loss which he should sustain by his death ; and he accordingly resolved to visit him, and to inspire hopes which might give a new impulse to his mind. On learning his intention, the chancellor, Mercurio Gattinara, endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, alleging that, should he persist in such a resolution, his own honour and dignity would compel him to release Francis at once and unconditionally ; but Charles was unable or unwilling to recognize this necessity, and he accordingly proceeded to the Alcazar without loss of time, and approached the bed of the almost dying monarch with a smile of courtesy and kindness upon his lips.

Francis had no sooner recognized his visitor than, although in a state of great exhaustion, he made an effort to raise himself to a sitting posture, murmuring

faintly : "Your majesty is then come at last to see your prisoner expire."

"Do not say my prisoner," was the bland reply, "but rather my brother and my friend. Have faith in me, for I have exerted all my energies to accomplish your liberation, which will speedily be effected."

The royal invalid, deluded by his own hopes, listened with avidity ; a long and apparently friendly conversation ensued ; and when the imperial hypocrite at length prepared to depart, he uttered the most earnest entreaties that Francis would be careful of his health, and not aggravate his disease by anxieties which were groundless. The effect of this assurance was electrical ; the recovery of the king was accelerated by his brightened prospects ; and he began to look forward with confidence to an early return to France.

The exasperation of the two baffled generals, whom the wily diplomast had outwitted, was beyond all bounds. Bourbon at once proceeded to Madrid, for the double purpose of urging his claims and preventing any treaty with Francis in which he was not included, and of exposing the base deceit of De Lannoy, whom he accused in the imperial presence of perfidy and cowardice ; while Pescara in his turn addressed an intemperate letter to the emperor, in which he complained that the viceroy had hurried to Spain to receive the applause of a victory, and to exhibit the French king as his prisoner, when he had neither contributed to the one nor taken the other, but had, on the contrary, endeavoured to evade the

battle, in which he had, moreover, shown such cowardice that he had trembled with terror, and constantly exclaimed that *all was lost*. In conclusion he declared him to be a poltroon and a traitor, and asserted that he was ready to prove it upon his body.

These representations, however, produced no effect upon Charles; while the distrust felt by the haughty Castilian nobility towards Bourbon induced them rather to exult in the craft of De Lannoy than to condemn it. So great, indeed, was the contempt which they professed for him that when the Marquis de Villana was applied to by the emperor to lend his palace to the ex-connétable, who had been unable to secure a commodious residence, he replied coldly: "I can refuse nothing to your imperial majesty; M. de Bourbon may inhabit my palace if it be your pleasure that he shall do so; but I pledge my word as a Castilian that, when he sees fit to vacate it, I will burn it to the ground rather than again take shelter under a roof which has been polluted by the presence of a traitor."

The position of the rebel duke was bitter in the extreme. His claims met with no attention, his services were disregarded, and he found himself an object of suspicion and dislike to all around him. The emperor treated him with the most chilling indifference; and the French king, when he was occasionally admitted to his presence, with an exaggerated courtesy which betrayed his want of confidence. Charles felt that he had no longer anything to fear from the once powerful duke, and Francis had lost faith in his honour.

Meanwhile Pescara, who had now the sole command of the army in Italy, did not affect to conceal his discontent. He had served the emperor with zeal and fidelity, and the injustice by which he was now rewarded aroused within him the recollection that he was an Italian, and that he was even at that moment labouring to destroy the liberties of his country. Unlike Bourbon, he found many to sympathize with him; and his exasperation became at length so violent that Jeromio Morone, the chancellor of Francisco Sforza, and one of the boldest and most able diplomatists of the age, who had for some time been planning a secret league against the emperor which was to embrace France, England, Florence, and Venice, confided his project to Pescara, and informed him that, on condition of his disbanding the imperial army, which alone could prevent its success, these powers were ready to confer upon him the crown of Naples.

The temptation was great; all the plans of Morone were matured; and the regent of France had pledged herself to march an army into Lombardy to support the independence of Italy. Pescara listened, and for a time wavered; but it is probable that his hesitation was brief, as Charles was ere long warned of his danger by the marquis himself, who revealed to him that a conspiracy had been formed against his authority, of which he would furnish all the details when he had ascertained the identity of its authors.

Nor was Pescara the only individual who volun-

teered this revelation—Clement VII., although involved in the plot, having written to inspire him with misgivings of the fidelity of his principal officers, from what motive does not appear ; while Louise de Savoie availed herself of the safe-conduct conceded to her daughter to forward letters to the emperor, in which she represented that, if he did not desire to see the whole of Europe in arms against him, he must modify, if not entirely withdraw, his claims on France.

To this last communication Charles returned, as was his wont, a cold and evasive reply ; fully maintaining his right to the *sobriquet* which the French wits, who never fail to create a *mot* even from their misfortunes, had bestowed on him of *Charles qui triche*—a somewhat lame play upon his familiar appellation of *Charles d'Autriche*. To Pescara, however, he vouchsafed a different answer ; assuring him that, although doubts had been suggested of his loyalty, he had never personally entertained them ; and instructing him to maintain a perfect understanding with the conspirators, betraying neither coldness nor suspicion, but affecting an inclination to avail himself of the overtures made to him by Francisco Sforza, while he suffered no means to escape by which the discovery of the real culprits might be accomplished. Acting upon this suggestion, Pescara invited Morone to visit him at Novarra, and upon his arrival concealed Da Leyva behind the tapestried hangings of the apartment in which the interview was to take place.

This perfidious arrangement effected, he overwhelmed the chancellor with questions ; declaring that he could not commit himself to any measure of which he did not thoroughly comprehend both the motives and the identity of the authors ; assuming, meanwhile, so determined an attitude that Morone, who feared that he might abandon the cause of the league, at length entered into the most minute details, among which was the meditated assassination of Da Leyva, his unsuspected auditor. At the conclusion of the conference the marquis parted from his visitor with calm courtesy ; but as he was about to leave the house he was encountered by Da Leyva, who at once arrested him in the name of the emperor.

The capture of Morone, and the important disclosures by which it had been preceded, necessarily put an immediate stop to the conspiracy ; the imperialists took possession of the fortresses in the Milanese, and Sforza made instant preparations for a desperate, although almost hopeless, defence, notwithstanding that he was at that moment suffering from fever of so virulent a nature that his death was anticipated. Nothing, therefore, appeared to oppose the entire conquest of the duchy ; and Charles already anticipated this result when news of the sudden demise of Pescara reached Spain. Popular rumour ascribed his death to poison, and it is certain that the act of treachery of which he had been guilty had excited against him the hatred of all the Italian princes, who had vowed vengeance upon his perfidious dealing. Be this as it might, however, the

brave Pescara, whose career had hitherto been untarnished, but who had now sullied his name with a stain which could never be effaced, expired at the early age of six-and-thirty—not on the field of honour and surrounded by sympathy and admiration, but supinely in his bed, the object of execration and reproach. During his last moments he confided the care of his wife, Victoria Colonna, and his Spanish troops, to the Marquis del Guasto, his cousin, who inherited his estates; and on the 30th of November 1525 terminated his brief, and, with one exception, glorious career.

Meanwhile the Duchesse d'Alençon, having embarked at Aigues-Mortes, landed at Barcelona, and proceeded at once to Madrid, where she was met on entering the gates by the emperor, who proposed to escort her in person to the residence of her brother—a courtesy which she was compelled to accept, although well aware that it was dictated rather by policy than kindness. She accordingly mounted a fresh palfrey which had been prepared for her, and, without waiting to throw off her travelling dress, rode through the streets of the city at the right hand of Charles, who was attended by a brilliant suite. At this interview the tenderness of the woman so completely masked the vigour of the diplomatist that even the wily emperor formed a false estimate of her character. He had, during their ride to the Alcazar, given her the most cheering assurances of the recovery of Francis; but Marguerite no sooner entered his apartment, threw

herself into his arms, and listened to the faltering tones of his voice, than she became aware how easily she had suffered herself to be beguiled.

"Can it indeed be you, *ma mignonne*?" murmured the king as he returned her caresses, heedless of the presence of his imperial visitor, "Oh, Marguerite, how dear, how inexpressibly welcome is this meeting—destined, perhaps, to be our last."

"And wherefore?" asked the duchess energetically; "yours is, believe me, a generous enemy, who will not even seek to resist my tears. He knows that you have already suffered deeply both in body and mind. Thus you see that I am the earnest of good fortune."

"I have already striven against my despair," said Francis gloomily. "I had even, for a time, dared to hope; but I have learnt much, very much, Marguerite, since we parted, and there are wounds of the heart which will not close."

The interview was a brief one, both Francis and his sister confining themselves to generalities until they could converse without restraint; and Charles having once more bade his "good brother," as he called the royal prisoner, be of better cheer, and trust to his sincerity, conducted the duchess to the residence which had been prepared for her, with the assurance that he was ready, since she had been entrusted with the negotiation by the regent, to accede to such terms as could not fail to be acceptable to so welcome an ambassadress.

Marguerite was, however, so well aware of the

bad faith of the fair-seeming emperor, that she did not suffer herself to be deluded by such a promise ; and when he had withdrawn she hastened to take counsel of Philippe de Villiers, the Grand-Master of the Knights of Malta, the Archbishop of Embrun, M. de Selva, the first president of Paris, and the Seigneurs de Montmorency and de Brion, by whom she had been accompanied to Spain, and who urged her if possible to conciliate Bourbon, and to form an acquaintance with the widowed Queen Eleonora, whom Francis had offered to espouse. Charles V., however, anticipating that she would take the latter step, had induced his sister to make a pilgrimage to Guadaloupe, whence she did not return until the duchess had left Spain.

The delight of Marguerite on finding herself once more near her idolized brother may be appreciated when it is stated that, on first receiving the intelligence of his illness, she had exclaimed in the agony of her despair, "Whosoever shall announce to me the recovery of the king, that messenger, though he be heated, jaded, and sullied by the filth of the roads over which he may have travelled, I will embrace and welcome as I would the proudest prince or nobleman of France ; and should he have no bed to rest upon, I will give him mine, and sleep upon the boards, to recompense him for the precious tidings which he brings me."

On the 4th of October Marguerite de Valois had her first official audience of the emperor ; and her extreme beauty, her uncommon intellect, her start-

ling eloquence, and, above all, the bold and uncompromising fearlessness of her spirit, were well calculated to produce a strong impression upon his mind. It is, moreover, probable that the knowledge of her royal brother's convalescence inspired her with additional energy; for she was unconscious that this very circumstance militated against her hopes; Charles, having ceased to tremble for the life of his prisoner, being less than ever inclined to permit his prey to escape him. Even his avarice was silenced by his desire of vengeance; he now saw himself without a rival in Europe, and gloried in the conviction; while he was conscious that Francis, once more at liberty, might yet establish a balance fatal to his ambition.

In this temper, therefore, the emperor felt little inclination to be contravened by a woman, albeit that woman was one of the loveliest and most intellectual of the age. In order to defer the conference he had removed suddenly to Toledo, but Madame d'Alençon had no sooner satisfied herself that the health of her royal brother was amended by her care and sympathy, and received from him full powers to act in his name and on his behalf, than she determined to follow him to that city, attended by M. de Villiers.

Previous to quitting the capital, however, she had invited the Duc de Bourbon to visit her, and her summons was instantly obeyed. Old associations and memories, to which neither ventured to allude, but which exerted a powerful influence over

both parties, rendered mutual confidence easy ; and before the ex-connétable took his leave he revealed to Margaret the real designs of the emperor, in so far as they had been entrusted to him ; assuring her that she had nothing to hope from either the generosity or the justice of Charles, but must act throughout upon the defensive. Strong in this conviction, therefore, she proceeded to Toledo, where she was received with a cold courtesy which might have damped a less energetic spirit, but which, as we have shown, produced no such effect upon that of Marguerite de Valois. The evident constraint of the emperor aroused her pride, and she opened the subject in a manner at once firm and dignified, by demanding to know the decision at which he had arrived. Charles briefly replied that he had already submitted his conditions to the king himself.

“ By whom,” said Marguerite, “ your imperial majesty has long been aware that they were definitely declined. I have therefore now only to learn your determination as to those which the king my brother offered to concede.”

“ They are inadmissible, madame ; the hand of the Queen of Portugal is pledged to the Duc de Bourbon, who alone can release it.”

“ But I am prepared, Sir, to assure your majesty that M. de Bourbon will not persist in his claim, now that he is aware of the views of his sovereign. This difficulty is consequently at an end, and we have only to discuss the remaining clauses of the treaty.”

"I have referred the whole matter to my ministers," said Charles stolidly, "and in their hands I am resolved to leave it."

"And is this, Sir, indeed to be the result of the fair promises with which you have beguiled both my brother and myself?" asked the duchess with a gesture of indignation which she did not even seek to disguise. "Are you in truth prepared to persevere in a course which must draw down upon you the contempt and abhorrence of all the princes of Christendom? Have you forgotten that Francis of France is your sovereign lord, and that you owe him homage for your Flemish provinces? Is a consciousness of your own temporary power to blind you to the fact that, by your present want of honour and good faith, you are alienating for ever the heart of the noblest sovereign in Europe, and converting one who might prove a powerful friend into an implacable enemy? Surely, Sir, you cannot have duly considered these things. Will not the world attribute to fear a measure so unprecedented as that of retaining a brother monarch in captivity? Nor, even should your prisoner, like the caged eagle, droop and die behind the bars which you have forged about him, will you be safe from the vengeance of his successors, for he has sons, Sir, whose first and holiest duty it will become to avenge their father's wrongs."

"I have on my side much to complain of at his hands, madame," said the emperor.

"Name your wrongs, Sir," replied Marguerite.

"and they shall be redressed. Has he attempted to usurp your territories? Has he rewarded the rebellion of your most powerful noble by present favour and brilliant promises? Has he offered to him a crown and the hand of a widowed queen? or has he met your open hostility with crafty policy and covert wrong?"

"Should M. de Bourbon resign the hand of my royal sister, as you allege, madame, I am willing to forego my purpose of making him an independent sovereign. Further than this I will not concede."

"I am ready, Sir," persisted the duchess, "to double the sum which has been already offered to your majesty for the ransom of the king, as well as to ratify the other conditions made by himself. That is my boundary also, and one which I cannot overpass."

"Then, madame," said Charles, as he rose from his seat, "our conference is ended. The remainder of this unhappy business must be arranged by my ministers, and in their hands, as I before remarked, I leave it."

"Pardon me if I yet delay your majesty a moment," said the duchess, as she drew from her bosom a small packet, which she unfolded. "Here, Sir, is an act of abdication drawn up by the king my brother, to be put in force in the event of an obduracy, which, nevertheless, he had not been led to anticipate at your hands. By this document he has transferred the sovereignty of France to his elder son, M. le Dauphin; confirmed the regency of

Madame d'Angoulême ; and, in case of her demise, entrusted it to myself ; reserving meanwhile the right of resuming the crown whenever and however he may recover his liberty."

A cold and doubtful smile passed over the lips of Charles. He too well understood the character of his rival to credit for a moment that he possessed the extent of moral courage requisite for such a sacrifice ; and, strong in this conviction, he remained silent, only replying to the energetic princess by a second bow, more imperious and significant than the first.

Thus tacitly dismissed, Madame d'Alençon had no alternative but to withdraw, which she did, as firmly and as haughtily as she had entered ; and leaving the counsellors who had accompanied her from France to discuss the question of a compromise with those of the emperor, she returned to Madrid to take leave of her brother, the period to which her safe-conduct extended having nearly expired.

Painfully convinced that there was indeed nothing to be hoped from the good feeling or chivalry of Charles, the duchess no sooner found herself again in the Spanish capital than she resolved, if possible, to effect the escape of the royal prisoner ; and, after conceiving, and dismissing as impracticable, a variety of schemes, she at length decided upon one, of which both the ingenuity and courage did credit to her high and indomitable spirit.

Among the scanty attendance conceded to Francis was a negro, whose duty it was to supply the

apartments with fuel. This man, who in height and figure greatly resembled the captive, Madame d'Alençon attempted to conciliate,—an endeavour in which she easily succeeded ; and, in a short time, by present kindness and promises for the future, he became so entirely devoted to her wishes that he declared himself ready to undertake anything which she desired, however great might be the danger attending it.

This point gained, no time was lost ; and it was arranged that so soon as proper preparations were made, the princess should take leave of her brother, and that, at dusk on the same day, the negro should carry in his accustomed load of wood for the consumption of the night, Francis in the meantime having stained his hands and face with a black dye. The king was then to exchange clothes with his deliverer, who was to retire to bed, as if overcome by the grief and fatigue of parting from his sister, while the captive himself was to leave the castle, and as rapidly as possible rejoin Madame d'Alençon and her friends, by whom the most cautious arrangements had been made to secure his safety from detection.

Up to the last week nothing occurred which could create the slightest fear of failure ; but it unfortunately happened that two of the king's personal attendants, both of whom were Frenchmen, and consequently aware of the intended flight, chanced to have an altercation, in the course of which, M. Clerment Champion, a gentleman of the bed-chamber, received a blow, of which he complained

loudly to his royal master. Francis, however, who was absorbed in his prospect of escape, and unwilling to remonstrate severely with those upon whose fidelity and assistance he now relied, affected to treat the matter lightly, and refused to interfere in what he considered merely as a temporary misunderstanding. Unhappily, Champion conceived his honour to be involved, and became so indignant when he discovered that the king refused to resent the insult which had been offered to him, that, in the first rush of passion, he left the castle and proceeded to Toledo, where, having obtained an audience of the emperor, he disclosed all the particulars of the proposed flight.

The conduct of Charles upon this occasion was perfectly consistent with his character. He expressed his surprise and regret that the monarch of France should have degraded himself by so unworthy and contemptible a design, and merely desired that the negro should be dismissed ; but while affecting this moderation, and even indifference, he nevertheless caused the statements of Champion to be reduced to writing, and properly attested ; after which he caused them to be forwarded to the captain of the guard, with such orders as soon made it evident to the king that his project had been discovered. The vigilance of those about him increased to inconvenience ; and the presence of d'Alarçon, who had lately relaxed somewhat in his obtrusiveness, became perpetual, while he was deprived of the services of his most devoted attendants.

Madame d'Alençon no sooner ascertained the failure of her hopes than she again demanded an audience of the emperor, at which she expostulated warmly and bitterly upon the increase of severity experienced by her brother ; attributing the whole plan of the escape to herself, and reminding him that his own injustice had driven Francis to accede to her request. Charles listened courteously ; and not daring to doubt that she must ultimately succeed in restoring the king at least to his former comparative liberty and comfort, she suffered day by day to elapse while she awaited the anticipated concession. No sign of relenting, however, escaped the emperor ; and at length she was warned by Bourbon that since the discovery had taken place an addition had been made to her safe-conduct of the words " provided she has attempted nothing prejudicial to the emperor or the nation ; " adding that he had ascertained it to be the intention of Charles to arrest her, should she remain within the Spanish territories an hour beyond the appointed time, and to retain her a prisoner until the king should consent to accept the proposed conditions for their mutual release. The high-spirited Marguerite, who had never for an instant suspected that the emperor could meditate so unmanly an act of treachery, now found that she had not an instant to lose ; and, consequently, ordering her escort, she at once set forth upon her homeward journey notwithstanding the severity of the weather ; despatching a messenger to the Comte Clermont de Lodeve, the Governor of Narbonne, to request him to meet

her at Salces with a body of armed men. In eight days she accomplished the distance usually performed in twice the time ; and at nightfall of the very day on which her safe-conduct expired she reached Rousillon, where the imperial troops by whom she had been followed saw her surrounded by a force with which they were unable to compete, and consequently retired.

CHAPTER VIII

1526

Despair of Francis—Recalls his act of abdication—Besetting weakness of the royal prisoner—The secret protest—Diplomatic treachery of the French king—Degrading concessions—Dangerous alternative conceded by Charles V.—Decision of the regent—Conference between Charles and Francis—Betrothal of Francis to the Queen of Portugal—Departure of the French king from Spain—His meeting with the princes—He is met at Bayonne by the Court—Arrival of Madame de Châteaubriand—Indignation of Louise de Savoie—The king is detained in the southern provinces by ill health—The imperialist envoys urge upon Francis the ratification of the treaty of Madrid—His evasive reply—He receives ambassadors from the Pope and the Venetian states—Complains of the harsh measures of the emperor—Replaces the generals who fell at Pavia—Abandons himself once more to dissipation—Nearly loses his life from a fall while hunting—Convokes an assembly of the princes and the Burgundian deputies—They refuse to sanction the alienation of the duchy from France—Francis signs a treaty with the Pope, Henry VIII., Francisco Sforza, and the Venetians—The imperial envoys withdraw from France—Indignation of Charles V.—He summons Francis to return to Madrid—Francis disregards the appeal—He neglects to assist his allies—Pescara replaced in Italy by Bourbon—The imperial army oppress the Italian people—Francis endeavours to negotiate with the emperor—His triumphant reception—Louise de Savoie resolves to supplant the Comtesse de Châteaubriand—The maid of honour—An apt pupil—The Court reception—Anne de Pisseleu is presented to the king—Effects of her appearance—Alarm of Madame de Châteaubriand.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of his sister, Francis fell back into the same state of discouragement in which she had found him. Charles continued inflexible, and he began to dread that, should he persevere in resisting his demands, he was destined to perpetual imprisonment. Such a prospect was agony to his impatient and restless spirit; and the more he

reflected upon abdicating his throne the more repulsive the idea became. He had, immediately upon drawing up the document entrusted to the princess, desired Messieurs de Montmorency and de Brion to proceed at once to France, as the attendants of the dauphin ; but upon ascertaining that the conferences then pending at Toledo produced no results, and that the emperor resolutely refused to renounce one iota of his claims, he wrote to desire them to return, and to bring with them the edict which subsequent consideration had determined him to cancel.

Had he persisted in his first high-minded and generous purpose, he would have escaped the censure with which he has been justly visited by posterity, have upheld his own honour, and preserved his country from sacrifices fatal to its greatness. But the besetting sin of Francis had ever been his vanity. He could not brook the concession of his sovereignty even for a season ; and, in compliance with the dictates of this unmanly weakness, he was induced to exhibit a selfishness baneful alike to his own reputation and to the welfare of his kingdom. On the 19th of December, only a few weeks after he had parted from Madame d'Alençon, he delivered to his plenipotentiaries an order to draw up a treaty in conformity with the will of Charles ; and on the 14th of January, when he was hourly expecting to be called upon to sign the treaty and take the oath to observe its conditions, he summoned them to his presence, together with the lords De Montmorency, De Boissy, and De Brion, and the several secretaries



ANNALS OF CONTEMPORARY

Constable of France

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and notaries who had been employed during the recent conferences; and, after having bound them by an oath to secrecy, he explained at length all his causes of complaint against the emperor, declared the document which he was about to sign to be null and void, it having been forced upon him while under restraint, and called upon them to witness that he never meant to fulfil the conditions to which it pledged him.

After having made this dishonourable and degrading compromise with his conscience, Francis unhesitatingly plighted his royal word, and affixed his royal signature to the iniquitous demands of the emperor—an act by which, had they been observed, he reduced the great kingdom over which he had been called to reign to an insignificance which would have rendered it a mere third-rate European power; for by these he bound himself to cede to Charles the duchy of Burgundy, the county of Charolais, the lordships of Château-Chinon and Noyers, the viscounty of Auxonne, and the jurisdiction of Saint-Laurent; to renounce the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois; and to withdraw his alliance and protection from the young King of Navarre, the Ducs de Gueldres and Wurtemberg and Robert de la Mark, thus dismembering his nation, stripping it of some of its finest provinces and of many of its available resources, and sacrificing several of his most tried and devoted friends.

Nor was even this the full extent of the humiliation to which he was pledged; for it was also stipulated that he should furnish Charles with troops,

vessels, and funds to prosecute his design of subjugating Italy; that he should give his sister in marriage to the Duc de Bourbon, who, together with his adherents, was to be fully pardoned, and restored to the possession of all their former territories and property of whatever description within the realm of France; and that he should reinstate in like manner the Prince of Orange, whose estates had been confiscated for his adherence to the cause of the emperor, and pay a ransom of two millions of crowns for his own release, as well as the debt due by Charles to England, which amounted to five hundred thousand additional. He was, moreover, to espouse the widowed Queen Eleonora of Portugal, and to affiance the dauphin to the infanta her daughter, to whom she was to be united as soon as he had attained a proper age; while, in compensation for this undue and monstrous condescension, which disgraced him equally as a monarch and a man, it was agreed that on the 10th of March next ensuing he was to be escorted to the frontier of his own territories, where he was to deliver up, in lieu of his own person, his two eldest sons as hostages; or, should he prefer it, the dauphin and twelve of the first nobles of France, selected by himself, the whole of whom were to remain in the custody of Charles until the pledges he had given were fulfilled. These exacted that Burgundy was to be ceded within six weeks, and the ratifications of the treaty exchanged within four months, or that Francis should return to Spain to be again imprisoned wheresoever the em-

peror should see fit, and to accompany him in person on his crusade against the infidels.

In leaving the French king at liberty to retain and to replace his second son by twelve of his subjects, there is little doubt that Charles calculated upon the womanly weakness of Louise de Savoie, to whom Francis referred the decision; but he had mistaken the nature of the regent, who, before she would make a definite reply, demanded to know the names of the nobles who were to act as substitutes for the young prince; when the emperor unblushingly mentioned those of the Duc de Vendôme, the Duc d'Aubigny, the Comte de Saint Pol, the Comte de Guise, the Maréchal de Lautrec, the Comte de Laval, the Marquis de Saluzzo, the Seigneurs de Rieux and de Brézé, the Maréchal de Montmorency, the Admiral de Brion, and the Maréchal d'Aubigny.

Louise de Savoie did not hesitate for a moment. She saw that by accepting this insidious offer she should deprive the French army of its most able generals, and she accordingly lost no time in setting forth for Bayonne, accompanied by her two grandsons and attended by a brilliant Court.

Meanwhile Charles in his turn proceeded to Madrid, where he had a long conference with Francis; after which, both occupying the same litter, they paid a visit to Queen Eleonora, and the ceremony of betrothal was performed. But, nevertheless, the French king was detained a prisoner in the Alcazar until the 21st of February, when he at length commenced his journey towards his own

frontier, under the joint guard of De Lannoy and Alarçon, and escorted by fifty horsemen.

On the 18th March he reached Fontarabia, and once more saw before him the blue and rapid waves of the Bidassoa, which marked the boundaries of the two kingdoms. In the centre of the river a large barge had been moored, and on the opposite bank he distinguished the Maréchal de Lautrec, with his two sons, also attended by a mounted escort. Boats were in readiness on either shore, and the several parties, each accompanied by eight soldiers, put off at the same moment, and in a few seconds boarded the barge. The greeting of Francis to his children was brief; his gaze was fixed upon the soil of France, and the same embrace combined at once his welcome and his leave-taking to the bewildered princes. In another instant he had sprung into the boat which now awaited him, and he no sooner touched the shore than, seizing the bridle-rein of a noble Arab which had been prepared for him, he vaulted into the saddle, and, waving his hand energetically, exclaimed, "Once more I am a king!" In another second he had dashed his spurs into the flanks of his gallant steed, and before a word had been exchanged between himself and Lautrec he galloped furiously from the spot; nor did he slacken his speed until he reached St. Jean de Luz, where he made a temporary halt which enabled his escort to join him; and then, with scarcely less rapidity, he pursued his way to Bayonne, where his mother and sister were impatiently expecting him.

To Louise de Savoie the meeting was one of unalloyed delight, but to Marguerite de Valois it was damped by the expatriation of her young and helpless nephews ; by the reflection that one of her brother's truest and most tried subjects, the veteran minister, De Semblançay, was still wearing away the evening of his life within the gloomy dungeons of the Bastile, without a hope of release save by death, the virulence of the regent having caused the process which she had instituted against him to assume the most threatening aspect ; and by the enfeebled state of the king himself, who, even amid the delight and exultation of finding himself once more within the boundaries of his own kingdom, and surrounded by his noblest and most faithful friends, nevertheless unconsciously betrayed the fearful inroads which captivity and suffering had made upon his health.

But there was one individual who, even more than Madame d'Angoulême herself, suffered every memory and every consideration to be swallowed up in the absorbing joy of this new meeting, and that one was the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, who, having succeeded during her imprisonment under the roof of her husband in gaining over the solitary attendant who had access to her apartment, had been apprized of the release and expected arrival of the king, and had lost no time, through the connivance of this new ally, in making her escape from Brittany ; and thus the Court had scarcely reached Bayonne when, to the great and undisguised displeasure of the regent, it

was joined by the only woman whose influence rivalled her own over the mind of her son.

In Marguerite de Valois, however, the fugitive countess found a willing and powerful protector. She was aware how essential the affection of the countess had become to the happiness of her brother; and when she witnessed the delight which beamed in his eyes as he advanced to greet her, she became convinced that without the presence of Madame de Châteaubriand his satisfaction would have been incomplete.

The shattered state of his health, and the extreme languor by which he was oppressed, induced the physicians of the king to advise him to remain for a time in the southern provinces; a counsel which he willingly followed, the enthusiasm of his subjects, and the public rejoicings consequent upon his return, leaving him no leisure for weariness or desire of change. The envoys of the emperor, who had accompanied him to Bayonne, and who urged upon him the ratification of the treaty which he had signed at Madrid, were briefly and coldly dismissed, with the reply that he could take no further steps until he had obtained the sanction of the States of Burgundy to separate that duchy from the kingdom of France, for which purpose he was about to convoke them; and they had no other alternative than to remain at Bayonne until the assembly should have met.

Francis then hastened to write with his own hand to Henry VIII. to express the gratitude he felt for his refusal to invade his territories; and to confirm

the treaty made between that monarch and the regent, which had been signed at Bordeaux on the 15th of April. He also received with affectionate courtesy the confidential ambassadors of the Pope and the Venetian senate, who were sent to congratulate him upon his return to France, and did not hesitate to complain with great bitterness of the harsh and ungenerous treatment he had experienced from the emperor; and to declare to them, when they pressed him to uphold the independence of Italy and the equilibrium of Europe, that he considered the treaty which he had been compelled to sign at Madrid of none effect, wrung from him as it had been by violence; and that he was not only ready to assist in the restoration of the liberty of the Italian states, but also to make an effort to overthrow the arrogant pretensions of Charles himself. His next step was to replace the brave generals and companions in arms who had fallen at Pavia, and to reward those who still survived; and these arrangements made, he abandoned himself to his favourite pursuits and pleasures with a zest little calculated to restore him to the health he so much needed.

From Bayonne he proceeded with all his Court to Bordeaux, and thence to Cognac, where he sustained a fall while hunting, by which his life was endangered, and a season of compelled inaction was induced, which enabled him once more to find leisure for more serious and important considerations.

By alleging the necessity of appealing to the States on the subject of Burgundy, Francis had

merely sought to gain time, for his disposition was too arbitrary to suffer him to submit to dictation from his subjects; but in order to silence the emperor by some measure which might bear the semblance of a deference to the national authority, he convoked¹ a meeting of the princes, great nobles, and prelates who were then at Court, to whom he introduced De Lannoy, stating the object for which he had followed him from Spain, and calling upon them to decide between himself and the emperor. As he had been aware would be the case, the whole assembly at once disowned his right to dismember the kingdom, and asserted that an oath exacted by a foreign sovereign could not exempt him from the observance and fulfilment of that which he had taken at his coronation. The deputies of the States of Burgundy, who had also been summoned, declared, moreover, that they would never consent to yield allegiance to any monarch save that of France, nor to permit their duchy to become a portion of the emperor's territory, and that, even should the king urge them to such a concession, they would resist while they had life.

De Lannoy was too skilful a diplomatist to be duped by so transparent a comedy as this. He felt that his imperial master was foiled with his own weapons; nor was his mortification decreased, even amid the splendid entertainments which Francis affected to give in honour of the emperor's envoys, by the fact that during his sojourn at Cognac the

¹ On the 12th of December.

French king signed a treaty of alliance with the Pope, Francisco Sforza, the King of England, and the Venetians, which assumed the name of the Holy League. By this treaty the contracting parties bound themselves to effect the liberation of the French princes, paying a ransom of two million golden crowns for their release ; to restore to Francisco Sforza the sovereignty of Milan ; and to put the other Italian states into possession of all the rights and immunities which they possessed before the war.

By consenting to enter into this league, Francis, who was at length desirous of peace, deliberately deceived those who had offered to become his allies. The subtle spirit of Louise de Savoie had suggested, and her son had voluntarily adopted, this treacherous policy in order to intimidate the emperor by the prospect of a war with Italy and England, and thus to induce him to withdraw his opposition to a compromise by which Burgundy would remain an uncontested province of France, and the liberty of the young princes be secured.

So open and avowed a disregard of the claims of his imperial master induced De Lannoy to expostulate warmly with Francis ; but as he could obtain no other reply to his reproachful arguments than an assurance that the king was ready to make any pecuniary compensation which the emperor might demand for the non-fulfilment of this condition of the treaty—a compromise which the envoys were not authorized to accept—they had no alternative but

at once to withdraw from the city and return to Spain.

On receiving the intelligence of this false dealing on the part of Francis, Charles exclaimed vehemently, "He need not accuse his subjects of this want of good faith. To prove his own sincerity he has only to fulfil his pledge, and once more to constitute himself my prisoner. Let him do that, and I will acquit him."

He then removed the dauphin and the Duc d'Orleans from Valladolid, where they had hitherto resided, to Old Castile; refused to accept the compromise offered by the French king; and formally summoned him to perform his promise, and to surrender himself once more a prisoner.

Francis was not, however, likely to reply to such an appeal while surrounded by homage and pleasure; and so completely did he ere long become immersed in his favourite pursuits that he even neglected to fulfil the pledges which he had given to his new allies; and instead of furnishing an army for the contemplated campaign he suffered all considerations of policy to be obliterated by the amusement of the moment.

In this supineness he was not imitated by the emperor, who was no sooner apprized of the death of Pescara than he despatched the Duc de Bourbon once more to Italy, with a promise that he should succeed to the sovereignty of the Milanese; giving him as his coadjutors the Marquis del Guasto (who had at the request of his cousin inherited his

command), Ugo da Moncada, and Antonio de Leyva, three brave and able generals, who were well worthy of such an association. He did not, however, provide any means of subsistence for the army over which they presided, but with cold-blooded atrocity authorized the troops to extort all that they required from the unfortunate Italians. The natural consequences ensued; the population, driven to desperation, formed constant conspiracies against the imperial generals, who revenged themselves by increased severity and augmented confiscations; and meanwhile Francisco Sforza began to suffer from famine at Milan, which still continued in a state of siege, awaiting in vain the succours which had been promised to him by the French king, who, instead of relieving the necessities of his friends, had recommenced his negotiations with the emperor to induce him to receive an equivalent in specie for the Burgundian duchy, and, upon various and puerile pretexts, delayed to ratify the treaty of Cognac.

The progress of Francis through his southern provinces was one perpetual triumph; not even as the victor of Marignano had he been so enthusiastically received; and he had not moral courage to tear himself from these new-found delights even to take the steps necessary to ensure their continuance. Absorbed in dissipation and self-indulgence, he left all public affairs in the hands and under the control of his mother, her unprincipled adviser, Duprat, and the creatures to whom he had sold the government

offices, and who were entirely at his disposal. Even amid the multitudinous cares which thus devolved upon her, however, Louise de Savoie found leisure and opportunity to watch all the movements of the king, and her exasperation was extreme when she became convinced that absence had only served to rivet the chains by which he was bound to Madame de Châteaubriand. She could not forgive the defiance to her will exhibited by the countess, whom she had herself exiled from the Court, in thus presenting herself once more before her at the very moment of the king's return, as if in marked contempt of her authority; and her indignation and jealousy were heightened by the reflection that nothing save a conviction of impunity could have led the countess to attempt so dangerous an experiment.

Vainly had she endeavoured to excite the coldness and distrust of Francis towards the beautiful favourite. He only smiled at her inferences and escaped from her remonstrances, and at length, in despair of effecting her purpose by argument or persuasion, Louise de Savoie, who was unrestrained by any moral consideration, and who had internally vowed the ruin of her victim, resolved to effect it by introducing her son to some new beauty, whose very novelty would give her an advantage over the more matured and familiar charms of Madame de Châteaubriand. In order to find a fitting object for this unworthy purpose, the duchess-mother was not compelled to look beyond her own lovely and licentious circle; and she smiled triumphantly as she remem-

bered that of all her train the most beautiful girl had not yet, owing to a slight indisposition, been presented to the king.

Madame d'Angoulême had, in the previous year, received into her household as one of her maids of honour Anne de Pisseleu, the daughter of Guillaume de Pisseleu, Seigneur de Heilly, who had at that period just attained her seventeenth year, and whose extraordinary loveliness was the topic of the whole Court. Highly educated, and endowed by nature with a sparkling wit which enhanced her acquired attainments, she had at once become a favourite with her royal mistress, to whose will she affected the most devoted obedience. In Mademoiselle de Heilly, therefore, Louise de Savoie believed that she had all to hope and nothing to apprehend, for she was already so well acquainted with the coquetry and dissipation of her character that she did not for an instant fear any opposition on the part of the young lady herself to a project which held out such brilliant promises of future greatness. She therefore instructed her maid of honour to remain secluded in her apartment until she should herself decide the moment of her presentation to the king; and when the spoiled favourite ventured to inquire the reason of this enforced solitude, Louise de Savoie only answered by a significant smile and an injunction to be careful of her good looks, and then, in order to escape further interrogation, she left the room.

As she withdrew Mademoiselle de Heilly remained for a moment lost in thought; after which

she approached a large Venetian mirror that stood upon her toilette, and looked into it long and anxiously. A cold proud smile rose to her lips as she turned away. She had already fathomed the meaning of the regent.

When the Court reached Mont-de-Marsan, Louise de Savoie once more paid a visit to the fair recluse, when she announced her intention of holding a circle on the following evening, and presented to her *protégée* a parure of costly pearls.

"I believe you to be attached to me, mademoiselle," she said, as she passed her fingers caressingly through the long ebon tresses of Anne de Pisseleu, who knelt at her feet to kiss the hand which tendered the costly gift; "nor do I fear that you will ever forget all that you owe to my favour. I look upon you as one who will be devoted to my will through every change of fortune, and governed by my wishes in every emergency and under all circumstances. To-morrow you will be presented to the king. Be equally obedient and loyal towards my son."

Eagerly was that morrow anticipated by the fair maid of honour, who had already been too long an inmate of the dissolute Court of the regent to be either surprised or startled by the new intrigue in which she was destined to play so prominent a part. She had already seen the rival whom she was tacitly called upon to supplant; and as she remembered her pale pure face, shaded by masses of bright auburn hair, her soft gray eyes, and well rounded but some-

what diminutive figure, she contemplated with secret exultation her own large and languishing black eyes, the clouds of rich ebon ringlets that fell about her brow and shoulders, the graceful proportions of her finely-developed figure, and the fascination of her smile ; until she began to feel that her success was certain, and to weave a web of dazzling and daring fancies which at once blinded her to the infamy by which they were to be purchased, and might have served to arrest the purpose of Madame d'Angoulême, had she been enabled to fathom the mysteries of that heart which she believed to be wholly absorbed by vanity and pleasure.

After a day devoted to hunting and an hour given to the imperious demands of public business, Francis proceeded to the apartments of his mother, which were brilliantly illuminated, and already crowded with courtiers of both sexes. Louise de Savoie occupied a raised seat beneath a canopy at the upper end of the principal saloon ; and on her left hand sat Marguerite de Valois, having immediately behind her the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, whose soft and childlike loveliness formed a marked contrast to the noble and proud beauty of her royal friend. The resemblance borne by the Duchesse d'Alençon to her brother was remarkable. The same piercing and imperious gray eyes, the same abundance of rich dark hair upon which the king had prided himself before the accident which induced him to wear it closely cut, the same finely formed but somewhat too prominent nose, the same full firm

mouth, and the same lofty figure and bearing, were discernible in each ; but the general harshness of the king's expression was tempered into softness by the urbane and affectionate nature of the duchess. Behind the *coffre*, draped with crimson damask, which was occupied by the regent, stood Madame de Brancas, the comptroller of the household, the Duchesse d'Usez, and the other ladies in waiting ; while on her right was placed, a step higher than her own, a similar seat for the king ; upon whose entrance Madame de Brancas advanced to the front of the duchess-mother, in order to introduce such of the guests as were not members of the Court, or who had from any cause been absent for a time from the royal circle, when it should be the pleasure of the regent to receive their salutations.

In the train of Francis were assembled Montmorency, whom he had just appointed Grand-Master, Maréchal, and Governor of Languedoc ; De Brion Chabot, newly created Admiral and Governor of Burgundy ; Téodoro Trivulzio and Fleuranges, who had both obtained the bâton of maréchal ; Saint-Pol, the new Governor of Dauphiny ; and Brézé, upon whom had been conferred the government of Normandy ; all of whom were to be formally and for the first time presented to the ex-regent by their present titles. Gay and gorgeous was the group, and it is questionable whether any who looked at that moment upon the individuals of whom it was composed had either leisure or inclination to reflect that the king had replaced the old and tried gene-

rals whom he had lost at Pavia by a bevy of Court favourites.

Francis advanced to the daïs, where, having saluted his mother, he bowed slightly in acknowledgment of the profound curtsey of Madame de Brancas, and then, in order not to impede the presentations, moved forward to the seat of Madame d'Alençon, where he continued in conversation with herself and the Comtesse de Châteaubriand until all the nobles had passed the duchess; after which, still trailing the white plumes of his hat along the tapestried floor, he returned to the side of his mother and took possession of the seat which had been provided for him.

The white wand of Madame de Brancas quivered in her hand as she severally presented the wives of the civic functionaries, whom, in consideration of the loyal reception which had been given to her son, the duchess-mother had admitted to her circle. The dignity of the comptroller of the household suffered under this enforced duty; and although the courtesy of Francis compelled him to welcome each as she approached with that winning condescension which secured the hearts of all to whom it was extended, it was evident that he was weary of the ceremony, when, as the last of the provincial ladies retired, proud and happy, to the lower end of the hall, the voice of the stately female official became suddenly sonorous, her wand steady, and her whole attitude dignified and calm.

"La Demoiselle de Heilly, madame." And Anne

de Pisseleu advanced towards the daïs. As she came forward with a slow but firm step, her eye never wandered from the face of her royal mistress. Her robe of crimson damask, richly embroidered with gold, fell about her in folds which might have draped a Grecian statue ; her dark hair was braided with pearls, and her neck and arms were adorned with the same costly gems. With dignified yet modest grace she bent her knee, and as Louise de Savoie extended her hand to raise her she turned one look upon her son.

That look told her that she had triumphed.

"The poor child has been long ill," said Louise de Savoie, as if to account for her sudden appearance. "Mademoiselle, the king will receive your homage."

Instinctively Francis rose, not as before, slowly and languidly, but with an expression of interest and pleasure so visible as to bring a glow to the cheek of his sister and tears into the eyes of Madame de Châteaubriand. He even suffered Mademoiselle de Heilly to kneel for an instant before he recovered sufficient self-possession to raise her ; and as he at length did so, he said in an unsteady voice—

"Be careful of your health, mademoiselle ; it is too precious to be neglected. The Court of Madame can ill afford the absence of its brightest ornament."

Mademoiselle de Heilly again curtsied profoundly ; after which she withdrew behind the seat of the regent, whence she did not move for the remainder of the evening. She could not have occupied a position better calculated to enhance her

extraordinary beauty; for as she occasionally bent down to reply to a few kind words addressed to her by her royal mistress, and her young and blooming countenance came into close contact with the still fine but rapidly fading face of Louise de Savoie, the contrast was striking.

The king, at the termination of the presentations, traversed the apartment, courteously addressing the local functionaries, and arranging with his favourite courtiers the pursuits of the following day; but it was evident to all about him that his thoughts frequently wandered; and he no sooner found himself at liberty to yield to his own inclination without a breach of that Court etiquette of which he was so punctiliously observant, than he returned to the immediate circle of his mother; first, however, approaching his sister, with whom, as well as with her friend, he entered into an animated conversation, which once more brought back a bloom to the cheeks of the countess. He nevertheless eagerly obeyed the summons of Madame d'Angoulême, who ere long recalled him to her side, where, although he listened deferentially to some communication which she made to him, his eyes were constantly fixed upon the beautiful maid-of-honour.

"I am lost," murmured the countess, as she anxiously watched the expression of the king's countenance.

"Take courage," whispered Marguerite in reply; "this is, believe me, a mere passing fancy; and you are well aware that my royal brother has never been

distinguished for his constancy. Anne de Pisseleu is undoubtedly very attractive ; but she is still a mere girl, who will feel rather terrified than flattered by such undisguised admiration."

"She displays no fear," sighed Madame de Châteaubriand.

"True," persisted the princess ; "but neither does she exhibit any exultation. She is as calm and as expressionless as a statue. You have claims upon the king which he will not overlook. Maintain your self-command, and rest assured that you are safe."

And, even knowing what she did of the habits and temperament of Francis, Madame d'Alençon had faith in her own words.

CHAPTER IX

1526-27

The Italian league is paralyzed—Alarm of the Pope—The Pope enters into a league with Pompeo Colonna—Colonna marches on Rome—The pontiff takes refuge in the castle of St. Angelo—Clement VII. capitulates—Francis is suspected by the Italian states—Is justified by the national poverty—Bourbon marches to Milan as the lieutenant of the emperor—Despair of the Milanese—The vow of Bourbon—Mistaken trust—Bourbon marches on Rome—Death of Bourbon—The sack of the Eternal City—Alarm of Christian Europe—Francis visits the capital—The chancellor-priest—A parliamentary mistake—Injustice of Francis—Trial of De Semblançay—The Duchesse d'Uzez—Contrast between the Court and the capital—Chambord—Royal festivities—The Court beauties—Disorderly state of the metropolis—Influence of the astrologers—Cornelius Agrippa and his royal patroness—The College of the Sorbonne—Guillaume Buchardt—The sanctuary—Francis sends envoys to Spain—Wolsey visits France—The hand of Marguerite de Valois is demanded for Henry VIII.—The princess declines the marriage—Francis refuses to bestow his sister-in-law on the English king—Wolsey returns to England—Charles V. disclaims the responsibility of the siege of Rome—The kings of England and France despatch a combined army to Italy under the command of Lautrec.

THE Italian league was paralyzed by the supineness of the French king. The Swiss levies which were to have been raised by the Pope and the Venetians did not arrive, and the Duc d'Urbino, the general-in-chief, refused to attack the Spanish army without their aid; while the pontiff, who possessed neither energy nor talent sufficient for the emergency in which he found himself, was alternately giving way to his resentments and yielding to the terror inspired by the consequences of his own imprudence.

Distrustful of his new allies, and without confidence even in his troops, he gave contradictory orders, which harassed those under his control without advancing his interests; and at length, anxious to secure himself in peace in his capital, he offered terms to the Colonna family, who were his declared and inveterate enemies, and was even short-sighted enough to enter into a treaty with them, and to disband his forces in Romagna, an error of which the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna¹ instantly took advantage by arming all his feudatories and dependents, and marching so rapidly and impetuously upon Rome that the Pope was compelled to shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo; while the cardinal, at the head of eight thousand men, passed the gates of the city, pillaged the Vatican and St. Peter's, and besieged the pontiff in the citadel. Thus pressed, Clement VII. found himself under the necessity of suing for peace, and through the mediation of Ugo de Moncada, Colonna consented to withdraw his troops from Rome on condition that the pontiff should afford no aid, either directly or indirectly, to the league for the space of four months.

The prolonged inaction of Francis at length excited the suspicion of the Italian states; and the Court of Rome in consequence despatched to France

¹ Pompeo Colonna, Bishop of Rieti, was created cardinal by Leo X., but was deprived of all his ecclesiastical revenues by Clement VII., who, however, restored them when Colonna saved his life at the sack of Rome, and made him legate at Ancona. He subsequently became Viceroy of Naples, and died in 1532, at the age of fifty-three years.

one of their most able diplomatists, who was instructed to exert himself to the utmost to discover if any intrigue hostile to their interests were cloaked beneath this apparent indifference ; and with authority, should such prove to be the case, to offer certain concessions in order to induce the French cabinet at once to make some demonstration in their favour. Juan Baptista Sanga, the envoy in question, soon discovered, however, that little penetration was required to unravel the seeming mystery, for the nation was almost bankrupt ; while the revenues, collected tardily and with difficulty, were forthwith swallowed up by the exigencies of the Court. He consequently assured his government that they need fear no aggression from France, for that even were the duchy of Milan freely tendered to the king at that moment it would be declined, however the secret wishes of Francis might lean to its possession,—the duchess-mother, the chancellor, and the council being resolved against it, and the monarch himself so absorbed by pleasure as to be careless of higher interests.

Aware that there was nothing to fear from the ambition of France, Sanga urged upon the ministers the expediency of redeeming the pledge given by their monarch ; and at length it was resolved that a fleet, consisting of four galleons and sixteen barks, which was then arming at Marseilles, should proceed to Genoa under the command of Pietro da Navarro, who, having been abandoned by Ferdinand of Aragon when he was made prisoner by the French, had

offered his services to Francis, by whom they were at once joyfully received and justly appreciated.

Navarro consequently sailed without further delay, and, on the 29th of August, joined the combined fleets of the Pope and the Venetians; while at the same time a small force was despatched to Milan to the relief of Fernando Sforza, under the Marquis de Saluzzo, but, as we have already shown, the expedition had been too long delayed. Bourbon had landed in Italy, and with the main body of the imperial army had marched to Milan. When he entered the persecuted city, the duke was met on all sides by misery and expostulation. Deputations of the magistrates and of the most respectable citizens waited upon him with complaints of the extortion and persecution to which they were subjected by the emperor's troops, whose rapacity and licentiousness, long unchecked by their superior officers, had reduced the inhabitants of the city to absolute despair; and assured him that their homes were invaded, their hearths polluted, and their very lives in danger.

Bourbon listened courteously and patiently to these representations, admitting that he saw on every side sufficient evidence of the correctness of their statements; but he confessed himself unable to curb the excesses of the troops by any other means than an immediate distribution of their arrears of pay, which he advised the inhabitants to raise, if possible, among themselves, declaring that they should no sooner have done so than he would evacuate the city and encamp his whole army beyond the walls.

To this proposal, however, the already impoverished citizens demurred. They had no guarantee that after making this new concession the duke would perform his promise; and they had already suffered so severely from the bad faith of the invading generals that experience had rendered them cautious. Their hesitation irritated Bourbon, who at once divined its cause; and as they were about to retire he said vehemently: "Consider your own interests, gentlemen. As matters stand I am unable to secure you from pillage and even from personal violence. By withdrawing the troops I shall effect this easily, and you will do well to trust me. I know that other pledges have been given to you which have been broken; but as for myself, I call God to witness that if I fail in performing my promise I wish that the first shot that is fired at the next battle in which I am engaged may end my life."

After so solemn a protestation as this the Milanese authorities hesitated no longer. With extreme difficulty they succeeded in raising thirty thousand ducats, which they delivered to the duke; but once more they saw themselves duped by the invading army. The troops still continued to occupy the city, and at length committed such fearful enormities that many of the burghers, driven to desperation, committed suicide in order to terminate their sufferings.

At this period the emperor might with ease have subdued the whole of Italy, had he been in a position to satisfy the demands of his army; the Duc

d'Urbino still persisting in his resolution to avoid all contact with the imperialist army until strongly reinforced ; but the want of funds to pay his troops rendered Charles unable to profit by the opportunity, while the lax state of discipline to which they were reduced gave him little confidence in their fidelity. Bourbon, however, whose whole prospects were involved in the success of the war, did not suffer himself to be disheartened by such considerations. He was aware that he possessed the affections of the soldiers, and he resolved not to yield an inch of the territory that he had won.

The arrival of Frundsberg, a German adventurer, who had already done good service at Pavia, and who ultimately joined him with a strong body of lansquenets which he had raised at his own expense, in order to share in the profits which must, as he was well aware, accrue to the victors in the struggle, soon determined him, moreover, to resume the offensive ; and as he could no longer promise the troops that their arrears would be supplied by the emperor, he at once inflamed their cupidity by proposing to them no less an enterprise than the conquest of Rome, the plunder of which treasure-teeming city would secure to them not only help but affluence. The hatred of Frundsberg and his Germans alike to the person and to the faith of the pontiff secured their hearty co-operation in the project ; and accordingly the imperialists, having wrung from the unhappy inhabitants of Milan their few remaining ducats, proceeded to Placenza, where, however, on the 17th of March, Frundsberg

was struck by apoplexy, and Bourbon accordingly assumed the command of their joint armies. Destitute alike of money and provisions, the host moved forward, plundering churches and villages, and spreading terror upon their path, until on the 5th of May they halted beneath the walls of the Eternal City; and on the following morning Bourbon, whose armour was covered by a surcoat of cloth of silver, himself raised a scaling-ladder, and calling upon his men to follow him, prepared to lead the assault.

Scarcely, however, had he reached the third round of the ladder when the fate which he had himself evoked at Milan overtook him. The ball of a retreating sentinel, who, scared by the unexpected attack, was hurriedly abandoning his post in order to give the alarm, struck him on the breast, and he at once became convinced that the wound was mortal. When he fell he was surrounded by several of his most tried and faithful friends, and by a last effort he conjured them to throw a cloak over his body, and to draw it aside, in order that the troops might not be induced, by the knowledge of his death, to abandon their enterprise. His request was complied with, and as they removed him from the fatal spot he breathed his last. The command of the imperial army devolved by his demise upon Philibert, Prince of Orange, whose proffered services, as we have already stated, had been coldly accepted by Francis, and who had in consequence transferred them to the emperor, in order, if possible, to revenge upon

the French king the mortification which he had experienced at his hands.

Under his guidance, therefore, the eager army, unconscious of the loss which they had sustained, pressed on, incited alike by vengeance and cupidity ; and, after a brief but bloody struggle, succeeded in rendering themselves masters of the doomed city ; and then commenced the frightful sack of Rome, which has furnished one of the darkest pages in the history of the civilized world, during which nothing remained sacred in the eyes of the invaders ; while the Pope and a body of the cardinals, who had succeeded in effecting their escape to the castle of St. Angelo, were at length compelled, after enduring for an entire month all the horrors of daily increasing starvation, to capitulate with the Prince of Orange, who ultimately took possession not only of the fortress but also of the persons of the pontiff himself, and of thirteen of the conclave, whom he retained prisoners until the pleasure of the emperor as to their ultimate disposal should be declared.

The fall of Rome occasioned general consternation throughout Europe, and sufficed to arouse even Francis to a sense of the impolicy and bad faith of his own want of energy, which had in a great degree conduced to this terrible catastrophe. He could not forget that it was by his persuasion the Pope had consented to a war with Charles, which he had previously been anxious to avoid, and that he had been beguiled into joining the league by promises which had never been fulfilled. Instead of a powerful army

the French king had supplied only an unimportant body of men, who had, moreover, remained totally inactive ; and he had asserted that England would co-operate with him, while Henry VIII. had in point of fact remained passive. In short he had falsified every promise, and he now beheld with consternation the success of a rival whom he had hitherto hated rather than feared.

An entire year had been consumed in the southern provinces, where, regardless of all save his own personal gratification, Francis had permitted no public cares to interfere with his career of lavish dissipation ; but at the termination of that period the increasing discontent of the nation, weary of the arrogant and oppressive rule of the duchess-mother and her ministers, rendered it imperative that he should visit the capital. The death of the wife of Duprat had induced the rapacious chancellor immediately to enter into holy orders, with a view to high and speedy ecclesiastical preferment, and his prescience had been rapidly rewarded by the Archbishopric of Sens ; but as by the demise of Etienne Poncher, the late prelate, the rich abbey of Saint Benoit had also become vacant, he determined to be at the same time his successor in that government. Here, however, he was met by the objection that the abbot must, according to an article of the *Concordat*, be elected by the community themselves, and by the declaration that they had already conferred the dignity upon François Poncher, Bishop of Paris.

Enraged by this opposition to his will, Duprat,

undeterred by any sense of justice or any dread of punishment, took forcible possession of the abbey, and imprisoned such of the monks as protested against his usurpation ; when the parliament, indignant at so flagrant a disregard of judicial authority, opposed his pretensions. But he found a powerful protector in Louise de Savoie, who represented their interference to her son as an encroachment on his own privileges ; and Francis, always jealously alive to any invasion of his authority, at once resolved to hold a bed of justice, at which all the great officers of the Crown, presidents, councillors, and other authorities were summoned to attend, and where the chancellor informed the parliament that they were at liberty to make such representations to the king as they might deem fitting.

Thus challenged, the first president, in the name of the whole Court, complained of the usurpation of the chancellor in the matter of the abbey of Saint Benoit ; declaring it to be a violation of the law, and praying for its restitution to the elected abbot ; but the eloquent spokesman, unfortunately infected by the atmosphere of the Court, concluded his remonstrance by an admission that " it would be a species of sacrilege to question the royal power, as the parliament were aware that the king himself was above the law, and could in all things act as he saw fit ; while they were equally convinced that he would be guided only by equity and justice."

This ill-timed and unguarded concession secured the triumph of the chancellor ; and in the course of

the same day the king published an edict by which he forbade the parliament thenceforward to interfere in any matters of state or of ecclesiastical preferment, and declared their decrees upon all subjects save those which were purely judicial to be null and void. He likewise denounced their efforts to limit the power which he had transferred to his mother, as well as that which he had entrusted to the chancellor; and concluded by proclaiming that save himself none had authority above that of the minister, and their opposition to his will was consequently of no effect, being merely that of private individuals, who possessed no right of control over his actions.

Nor was this the only demonstration of injustice by which Francis signalized his return to his capital. Louise de Savoie, the friend and mistress of Made-moiselle de Heilly, who was rapidly undermining the influence of the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, had obtained, through her immoral and degrading encouragement of the licentiousness of her son, so perfect an empire over his mind, that he had altogether ceased to oppose her will; and she therefore seized so favourable a moment to gratify her still undiminished hatred of the unfortunate De Semblançay. Aided by Duprat, who was ever ready to repay her good offices in kind, she urged upon the king the propriety of terminating the long captivity of the unfortunate finance-minister by a trial, which must either decide his innocence and restore him to liberty, or, in the event of his guilt, terminate an existence sullied by crimes worthy of an ignominious death.

Anxious as he was to conform to her wishes in all things, Francis nevertheless hesitated for a time to comply with this suggestion. He remembered the long and faithful services of the veteran statesman, whom he had been accustomed to call "his father;" he recalled his boyish years, during which the unhappy old man was ever ready alike with assistance and advice; and he even expressed doubts of his delinquency; but Louise de Savoie was not to be so silenced. She represented that if the king, who had been principally injured by the rapacity and peculations of the accused, believed him to be innocent of the charges preferred against him, it was probable that his judges would prove equally lenient, when he would be free to retire, and die in peace upon one of his own estates; whereas he was at present a captive in his old age, and suffering all the penalty of crime; and this argument decided Francis, who, glad of any pretext to escape from a subject which wearied him, at length consented that the victim should be put upon his trial.

Accordingly a court was convened, composed of the creatures of Duprat; De Semblançay was confronted with his accusers; the judicial forms were scrupulously observed; and after the accusations had been read, he was called upon for his defence. Aged, heartbroken, and moreover convinced that his fate was already decided, the prison-worn old man was not even yet utterly subdued; and the energetic indignation with which he repelled the charges that were brought against him might have carried conviction to the coldest heart. His eloquence, how-

ever, availed nothing against the known will of his vindictive enemy ; and on the 9th of August the zealous and devoted servant of four successive monarchs, the upright minister, and the honest, uncompromising victim of a base revenge, was hanged at Montfaucon, in his sixty-second year, like a common felon.

Anxious to divert the mind of the king from dwelling upon a catastrophe which he might by an effort of moral courage and good feeling have averted, Louise de Savoie, on the evening of the execution, held a circle in her villa of the Tuilleries, where Francis, in the society of Mademoiselle de Heilly, and the other beauties of his mother's court, soon recovered his gaiety. As he traversed the glittering bevy he paused to converse with the young and witty Duchesse d'Usez, and, animated by her sparkling gaiety, he addressed her more than once as "my child," in order not to check, by a more ceremonious appellation, the flow of her vivacity. Nothing, however, could long detain him from the side of the new favourite, and he ere long made his way to the immediate circle of his mother ; while the young duchess no sooner saw herself at liberty to change her seat than she retreated to a corner of the saloon, where, burying her face in her hands, she appeared to have become a prey to the most violent grief.

For a time this extraordinary display of emotion passed unobserved ; but at length it attracted the attention of her companions, who eagerly inquired the cause of her emotion.

"Alas, alas!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, "well may I weep. The king has just left me, and during our conversation he three distinct times called me his 'child.' I am afraid of sharing the fate of M. de Semblançay, for you may remember that he always called him his 'father;' and as the relationship is equally close, I am dreading that ere long I shall also be hanged at Montfaucon."

This exclamation, and the tragi-comic voice in which it was uttered, elicited a peal of laughter which even the etiquette of a Court could not suppress. The curiosity of both the king and his mother was excited, and they demanded to know the cause of this sudden mirth, which, with some hesitation, was declared to them. Francis joined in the general hilarity; but Madame d'Angoulême, whose conscience was less at ease, commanded the adventurous young duchess to retire to her own apartment, and accompanied the order by a reprimand which effectually checked her merriment.

The state of the Court and that of the capital presented at this period a contrast alike great and deplorable. Before his departure for Italy the king had examined and approved the plan laid before him for rebuilding the palace of Chambord, and despite the general poverty of the nation the duchess-mother had so energetically carried out his views that considerable progress had been made before his return. The celebrated Primaticcio,¹ whose splendid works

¹ Francisco Primaticcio was born at Bologna in 1490, and was of noble family. He was the pupil of Innocenzia da Imola, and of

in stucco for the castle of Té in Mantua¹ had rendered his name famous throughout the continent, had been summoned to France in order to superintend the construction of the new edifice, as it was the ambition of Francis to render it more rich and splendid than any of the regal residences of Italy—a design in which he was ably seconded by the magnificence of his architect; immense sums were wrung from the necessities of the people, and placed at the disposal of the artist; and eighteen hundred workmen were engaged for the space of twelve years before the building had attained to the degree of perfection which it ultimately reached.

Nothing could exceed the gratification of the king as he once more wandered through the woods of his favourite retreat, and contemplated the gorgeous residence which even at this early period gave splendid promise of its eventual magnificence. The ancient castle of the counts of Blois had totally disappeared; the contracted courts, enclosed by dense and gloomy fortifications bristling with cannon, had been swept away; and the majestic palace now stood in the midst of a park of twelve thousand

Bagna Cavallo, or Ramenghi. In 1540 Francis I. bestowed on him the abbey of Saint Martin de Troyes, and commissioned him to execute, on his return to Italy, a hundred and twenty-five statues and busts in bronze for the palace of Fontainebleau, which was also profusely adorned by his paintings. Appointed controller of the crown buildings by Henry II., and commissary-general of the national edifices by his successor Francis II., he died alike wealthy and honoured in the year 1570.

¹ The castle or palace of Té, sometimes called T by old writers, was built for the Gonzaga family by Giulio Romano, and decorated in fresco by him. It was one of the most celebrated buildings in Italy, and is frequently mentioned by Benvenuto Cellini in his *Memoirs*.

acres, with a noble chase abounding in deer and wild-boar, and surrounded by a wall nearly eight leagues in extent; while the river Cosson meandered through banks of the richest grass, or flowed through groups of forest timber, until it ultimately laved the foundations of the edifice which was reflected on its pellucid current as on the surface of a glittering mirror. Within, the combined talents of Jean Goujon¹ and Pierre Bontems had enriched its saloons and galleries with the most delicate productions of the sculptor's art; while the gorgeous and graceful frescoes of Leonardo da Vinci and Jean Cousin² adorned the vestibules and corridors.

¹ Jean Goujon, one of the most famous sculptors and architects of France, was a Parisian by birth, and was regarded as the restorer of the art, and honoured by the appellation of the Correggio of sculpture, from the extreme gracefulness and delicacy of his productions. His most celebrated work was the *Hunting Diana*, so long the treasured ornament of Malmaison. It was Goujon who constructed the Fontaine des Innocents, while the principal number of the fine bas-reliefs of the Louvre and the Hôtel de Carnavalet also were the work of his chisel. He was still engaged upon one of the former when he was shot, on the 24th of August 1572, at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, his religion having caused his genius to be disregarded.

² Jean Cousin was an artist of extraordinary versatility, being at once a painter, a sculptor, an architect, an engraver, and an anatomist. He was born at Soucy, near Sens, in the year 1530, and became so celebrated as to acquire the title of the Michael Angelo of France. His finest work of sculpture was the mausoleum of the Admiral de Chabot; but it was to his paintings upon glass that he was principally indebted for his fame. In this delicate and difficult branch of art he excelled; all the costly windows of the chapel of Vincennes were his work, and those of the castle of Anet, executed entirely in gray and white, as well as a full-length figure of Francis I., remarkable for the extreme gorgeousness of its colouring. It was Cousin who produced the first oil-painting ever executed by a French artist—a large tableau representing the *Last Judgment*, to which he, in all probability, owed his *sobriquet*. He died in 1589, leaving behind him a *Treatise on the Proportions of the Human Body*, highly esteemed by artists.

Thus, although still unfinished, the palace of Chambord offered many attractions to the king, who forthwith withdrew from the capital, and commenced a series of fêtes at his favourite residence, by which he soon became so thoroughly absorbed as to forget for a time alike the captivity of the Pope and the watchful enmity of the emperor. Tourneys, carousals, hunting parties, balls and banquets succeeded each other in endless variety; but while Francis still affected to regard Madame de Châteaubriand as the presiding deity, it soon became not only apparent to herself but also to those by whom she was surrounded that her star was rapidly paling before the influence of the beautiful and artful Mademoiselle de Heilly.

Few, however, cared to sadden their own enjoyment by regrets for the fallen favourite; the tide of time seemed to all beside herself to flow over golden sands. The wit of Marguerite de Valois—the superb beauty of Diane de Poitiers, who, on the return of the king, had hastened to accept a situation in the household of the duchess-mother which necessitated her constant presence at Court, and thus enabled her to exchange the grim glories of Anet and the paternal tenderness of her aged husband for the gilded pomp of Chambord and the flatteries of a young and gallant monarch—the growing influence of the fascinating Anne de Pisseleu—all combined to throw the timid and silent sorrows of Madame de Châteaubriand into the shade. None had leisure or inclination to remember how recently

they had coveted her smiles. The nature of a courtier resembles that of the heliotrope ; while the sun shines brightly it expands and perfumes the space about it, but at the first appearance of a cloud it closes upon itself, and no longer develops either odour or beauty.

Such, then, was the state of the Court. All public business still remained in the hands of Louise de Savoie and her myrmidons, while the voice of passion and of pleasure was alone suffered to intrude upon the ears of her son. But meanwhile the capital of the kingdom had become the very hotbed of discontent, licentiousness, and misrule.

The prolonged absence of the king, and the capricious, grasping, and tyrannical government of the duchess-mother, had rendered the citizens desperate. Well aware that they were impoverished to support the profligacy of a Court which was not even held in the capital, they became reckless and violent. The narrow, unpaved, and unlighted streets were nightly the scene of rapine, violence, and even murder. The *guet*, or night-watch, composed of timid and indolent burghers, for the most part unarmed from the dread which they entertained of bearing weapons in whose use they were inexperienced, were constantly beaten from their posts by the rabble of the city and the bands of disorderly students who prowled through the obscure lanes and alleys in pursuit of mischief, even attacking the royal musqueteers, and committing the most atrocious acts of violence upon the courtiers and their adherents

whenever an opportunity presented itself to indulge in such aggressions.

All, in short, was anarchy throughout Paris. The students of the *Pré-aux-Clercs* were linked with the vilest ruffians in a close community of evil, which had spread like a leprosy ; and these students were of themselves sufficient to destroy the safety and tranquillity of the city. While the nobility during their brief sojourn in the metropolis confined themselves to excursions in the forest of Saint Gervais or the environs of Romainville, their affected disgust but actual apprehension abandoned to the lawless scholars all the vast meadows which then covered the left bank of the Seine, from the old street of Saint Jacques to the walls of the convent of Saint Germain ; while the vagabonds and outlaws who formed at that period so considerable a portion of the population had, by an extraordinary caprice for which it appears impossible to account, selected as the scene of their orgies the frightful neighbourhood of Montfaucon, where they danced, feasted, and drank under the shadow of the gallows, which was seldom free from its ghastly freight ; and beneath this fearful evidence of judicial authority and human justice the most licentious and wanton excesses were of nightly recurrence.

Nor was the one great link between these three several grades of society less to be reprehended than the unhallowed use which each made of its especial prerogative ; for that universal bond was created by a set of fanatical charlatans and impostors, who,

assuming to themselves the character of alchymists and astrologers, penetrated alike into the velvet-draped saloons of palaces and the mud-walled hovels of the squalid children of poverty and vice. In the present day it is scarcely possible to induce a belief of the mysterious and frequently pernicious influence exercised by these impostors, who, while outwardly affecting to be absorbed in the occult labours of their calling, were in fact the vendors of poisons and other deleterious drugs, by which human life was constantly perilled and human caution as perpetually rendered useless.

Even Louise de Savoie herself, whose strength of character and firmness of will might have been supposed to exempt her from all such puerile superstitions, took into her service the celebrated Cornelius Agrippa, who, much as he detested the arrogant and imperious duchess, consented to join her household in the double capacity of physician and astrologer, although he soon betrayed that the motive by which he had been influenced was wholly unconnected with the liberal salary that he received, for when consulted as to the fate of the Duc de Bourbon, on his first admission to her presence, he gratified his secret animosity to his royal mistress by prophesying the success of the duke in all his undertakings and his signal triumph over his enemies,—an indiscretion which so exasperated the regent that he was summarily dismissed, deprived of his pension, and forbidden the Court, for which severity he revenged himself by the publication of a bitter satire,

wherein he likened his late patroness to Jezebel, and drew so forcible a parallel between the two individuals that he was compelled to save his life by a speedy flight from the French territories. Suffice it that crime, imposture, and wretchedness had reached their acme in the metropolis of France, and that the very seats of learning and science were polluted by the ignorance and superstition of those by whom they were tenanted.

Nor was even the ancient college of the Sorbonne exempted from the general degradation ; for at the period of which we write, this dwelling of the most erudite doctors of the University and the members of the *Chambre Ardente*, whose duties consisted in trying all cases of alleged magic and sorcery, rather resembled a fortress than the abode of men of letters. It was, in fact, a species of vast and sombre stronghold, defended by ditches, ramparts, towers, bridges, and all the accessories of a place of war, while its occupants were more than suspected of illegal and mysterious practices which required all the protection external circumstances could afford. The spies of the Sorbonne invaded, unsuspected, every hearth throughout the capital, and influenced every popular movement. Nor did even the government escape their machinations. The celebrated syndic, Noël Bédier, a man as unprincipled as he was talented, had attained to such supremacy over the spirits of the people that he had become the actual sovereign of the capital, and by his ability in exciting the passions of the mob had made himself feared not

only by the magistracy but even by the king himself. Alike unscrupulous and ambitious, he did not suffer himself to be deterred from any object by considerations either of law, loyalty, or justice ; but whenever his claims were disallowed, or his demands resisted by the authorities, at once armed the students and led them to the Palace of the Tournelles, to compel by force the concessions which had been refused to his arguments.

This measure, bold and presumptuous as it was, seldom failed to prove successful ; for not even the disciplined troops of Francis could make head against so formidable a band of opponents as that with whom, upon such occasions, the turbulent syndic deluged the streets of the capital. Not only were the sturdy and discontented scholars ever ready to obey his bidding, and prepared to second him in every act of violence, but they had secured as their auxiliaries all that houseless, lawless, and vagabond class of the population recognized under the general name of *maltôtiers*, the very refuse and scum of an ill-organized and licentious capital, and which consisted of thieves, emancipated felons, discharged soldiers, foreign adventurers, and other rabble, whose means of existence depended entirely upon their wits.

With these outcasts the grand-master had established a perfect understanding by signals and watch-words known only to themselves, and the horns of the students no sooner sounded behind the old walls of the Sorbonne than they were answered by a shrill cry from the depths of the Cour des Miracles, the

rendezvous of these vagrants, and a general rush was made towards the gloomy pile, whose tenants they were thus called upon to assist or to defend. No principal gate gave entrance to the college, but numerous small doors had been constructed on each of its sides, which were constantly watched from within, in order that immediate ingress might be secured by any of the students who, when hotly pressed by the archers of the guard, found it desirable to effect a retreat ; or by some guilty ally of the indulgent university who sought an asylum against justice. Once within the walls, no criminal could be seized, even by order of the king himself, the power and privileges which had been accorded to the institution placing it beyond royal jurisdiction, and in every case the delays created by the syndic ensuring the escape of the culprit.

Such was the condition of Paris, shunned by the proud and the wealthy, groaning under a heavy weight of taxation which crushed its citizens to the earth, and delivered over nightly to the saturnalia of a host of reckless and desperate ruffians, who acknowledged no law save their own will, and no authority save that of their elected chief. And yet Francis I. slumbered at his post ; he disdained to measure his strength with a rabble who, in the hope of largess, shouted and cried *Noël* as he traversed the city streets ; he refused to hearken to the remonstrances of his burghers, whose industry and enterprise could alone have restored the prosperity of the capital ; and he resolutely pursued his headlong

career of pleasure and profusion with a mine ever ready to spring beneath his feet.

Soon, however, he was compelled, by the general indignation felt throughout Europe at the continued captivity of the Pope, to arouse himself from the dream of selfish indulgence to which he had yielded, and to send envoys to Spain, as Henry VIII. was also preparing to do, to negotiate for the liberation of the pontiff, and to demand an explanation of the emperor's intentions relative to the sacred person of his prisoner.

The two monarchs had long been engaged in a treaty for the marriage of Francis with the Princess Mary of England, the French king being anxious to evade the alliance of the Dowager-Queen of Portugal ; and as the increased and increasing power of Charles gave them augmented cause for alarm, they became more than ever anxious to consolidate their friendship. By the terms of this treaty, which had been signed on the 20th of April by the Bishop of Tarbes and the Vicomte de Turenne, on the part of Francis, it was agreed that the daughter of Henry VIII. should become the wife of the French king, should he be enabled to liberate himself from his engagement with the emperor's sister, and remain a widower until the princess should have attained a marriageable age ; or in default of the monarch himself, that she should give her hand to the Duc d'Orleans, his second son, at the same period ; while the English monarch was on his side to renounce his claim to the title of King of France, on consideration of

receiving the annual sum of five millions of crowns, to join the league then forming against the emperor, and to furnish in the month of June following a force of nine thousand infantry, to which Francis was to add eighteen thousand foot, and a proportionate body of lances ; the whole of which combined army was to march into Spain to summon the emperor to deliver up the persons of the French princes upon the payment of two millions in gold as their ransom money ; and in case of his refusal to accede to this proposition, to declare war against him in form.

The captivity of Clement VII., however, rendered some modification of this first treaty essential to the interests of both kingdoms ; and, accordingly, on the 29th of May, it was decided by a second negotiation that the French army should alone undertake the invasion of Italy, while England should furnish the monthly sum of thirty thousand crowns to defray the expenses of the war ; and, finally, in order to obviate all possibility of future disagreement or misapprehension, the English monarch decided to despatch the cardinal-legate once more to France, in order that every article of the treaty should be duly and definitively arranged between Francis and himself.

The mission was one which enabled the haughty minister to indulge without restraint in that inordinate ostentation which formed so striking a feature in his character, and he accordingly set forth with a train rather befitting a sovereign than a subject. Having taken leave of Henry, he travelled on the

first day from his palace of Hampton Court to Stone, in Kent, where he passed a night at Stone-place, the seat of Sir Richard Wingfield, and on the morrow at daybreak he resumed his journey, accompanied by the Bishop of London, the Earl of Derby, and Sir Thomas More, and attended by a train of noblemen and gentlemen, who preceded him three abreast, all clad in velvet and satin, and wearing massive chains of gold about their necks. In the van of these rode a body of the cardinal's yeomen, and upwards of two hundred serving men in his liveries of orange-tawny, with his initials and cardinal's hat embroidered upon the breast of their doublets; while immediately before him were borne two tall crosses of beaten silver, two ponderous staves of the same precious metal, and his hat and embroidered cloak-bag. Wolsey himself, according to his usual habit, bestrode, in affected humility, a sleek and ambling mule; but the magnificence of his apparel, and a led horse, richly caparisoned, for his occasional use, converted the seeming meekness into a pungent epigram, and thus "the observed of all observers," he travelled to the coast; and with the same brilliant retinue, and in the same lordly pride, landed in France, where, having reached Amiens, he was received by Francis with all the state and ceremonial which could have been observed towards Henry himself.

The conferences lasted for a fortnight, and during that period nothing was omitted on the part of the French king and his courtiers which could flatter the vanity and arrogance of the English minister; every

hour that could be wrested from public business was devoted to the most sumptuous entertainments ; and as anxiety to complete and consolidate an amicable arrangement existed on both sides, four separate treaties were ultimately concluded ; Wolsey, in conjunction with four other cardinals, addressing at the same time a letter of respectful sympathy to the Pope, in which they entreated him to appoint a vicar-general as the representative of his authority on the northern side of the Alps, in order that the interests of the Church might not suffer during his captivity.

From Amiens the cardinal-minister accompanied the French king to Compeigne, in order, as he affirmed, to pay his respects to the duchess-mother, and once more his reception was magnificent in the extreme. The lovely and brilliant Court of Louise de Savoie put forth all its attractions, and balls, banquets, and other amusements filled up the time so fully that there scarcely appeared space for more serious occupation. Nevertheless Wolsey did not suffer himself to be engrossed by these diversions ; but after having confided to Francis the conscientious misgivings of the English monarch on the subject of his marriage with Katherine of Aragon, and his determination to have it annulled by a papal bull, he seized a favourable moment to suggest to the French king the policy of effecting an alliance between his own sovereign and Marguerite de Valois.

The cheek of Francis flushed and his brow grew dark.

“Your eminence is perhaps not aware,” he said

evasively, "that the hand of Madame d'Alençon is promised to the Duc de Bourbon."

"But your majesty cannot possibly contemplate the completion of such an engagement," persisted Wolsey; "the King of France would assuredly never bestow his sister in marriage upon a traitor."

"I have, in truth, no such intention," was the cold reply; "but, nevertheless, until the engagement shall have been dissolved, she is no longer free. Where there exists a previous and still unbroken tie, no new bond can be valid."

The cardinal bit his lip. "The duchess may herself refuse to ratify a pledge given without her sanction," he said at length cautiously.

"Her refusal shall in that case suffice," replied Francis, "for I will never consent to sacrifice her happiness to any consideration of state policy. All I can do, therefore, monseigneur, is to refer you to Madame d'Alençon herself. Let her decide."

"I can require no more," said the haughty cardinal, with a profound bow and an almost imperceptible smile. "The crown of England and the hand of its young and chivalrous monarch can scarcely be rejected by one of the proud blood of Valois."

The primate had, however, miscalculated the nature of the proud blood which he thus insidiously vaunted; for Marguerite de Valois replied to his degrading proposal with the most complete and unmitigated disdain, reminding him of the friendship which had existed between the ill-fated Katherine and her sister-in-law, Queen Claude, and declaring that

she never would be accessory to an act of tyranny and injustice. In vain did the cardinal represent that the delicacy of his sovereign's conscience alone induced him to consent to the contemplated divorce ; the duchess was immovable, and Francis had begun to congratulate himself upon escaping through her means from a difficulty which threatened to dissolve the friendship between himself and his brother-monarch, when Wolsey, undeterred by the scorn of Madame d'Alençon, after courteously lamenting the failure of a project which promised, as he affirmed, such beneficial results to both kingdoms, affected suddenly to remember that there was still another method by which their respective interests might still be equally assured ; and, with unblushing pertinacity, suggested to the French king that, in lieu of that of his sister, he should bestow upon Henry the hand of the Princesse Rénée, the sister of his late wife.

Herein, however, he was destined to be again baffled ; for Francis himself instantly and resolutely refused his sanction to an alliance which would weaken his claim to the duchy of Brittany, and without any appeal to the princess at once negatived the proposal. Wolsey was accordingly compelled to take leave of the French Court without having accomplished the object which was without doubt the principal motive of his mission ; and, without further delay, he returned to England with the same state and splendour as he had quitted it, enraged at the disappointment to which he had

...to the preparatory document Charles
...gratified as he might be by feeling
...his own power the person of the
...embarrassed by this very
...His first impulse had been to re-
...Spain in order that his custody
...but he was soon con-
...of this project by the remon-
...council and the determined

opposition of his Italian army, and thus he found himself compelled to abandon the design.

As the cold and unsatisfactory reply of the emperor gave them no guarantee for his ultimate acceptance of the proposed terms, neither Henry nor Francis felt himself bound to await further concessions; and they accordingly prepared to put the terms of their treaty in force by the organization of an army which was to be maintained at their joint charge, under the command of the Maréchal de Lautrec, to whom it was confided at the express request of the English king. The troops were soon in motion; but before they had crossed the Alps Francis effected a second treaty with Sforza and the states of Venice and Florence, who, eager to disembarass Italy of the imperialist soldiery, were readily induced each to furnish their quota of troops in aid of the enterprize; and once more the power of Charles was threatened by a confederated army.

CHAPTER X

1526-27

Rivalry between the two favourites—Remonstrances of Madame de Châteaubriand—Royal recriminations—The palace of the Tournelles—Marriage à-la-mode—Anne de Pisseleu created Duchesse d'Etampes—Diane de Poitiers—Last interview of Francis and Madame de Châteaubriand—Madame de Châteaubriand leaves the Court—The jewel-casket—Marriage of Marguerite de Valois and the King of Navarre—Domestic dissensions—The Court of Bearn—The queen's saloon—Marguerite protects the reformers, and is persecuted by the Sorbonne—Partial conversion of Henry of Navarre to Lutheranism—False position of the princess.

THE political interests of his kingdom had, however, even while they compelled him to devote a portion of his time to public business, failed to withdraw Francis altogether from his more cherished pursuits. The favour of Mademoiselle d'Heilly increased daily, and became at length so undisguised that the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, reluctant as she was to admit the truth even to herself, began to apprehend that her influence over the fickle mind of the monarch was lost for ever. The Duchesse d'Angoulême, satisfied with her success in having undermined the power of a favourite who had dared to enter into a rivalry with herself, affected not to perceive the daily increasing passion of her son for the frail maid-of-honour, but flung herself totally

into politics, leaving the intrigues of the Court to produce their natural consequences ; and her resolution of neutrality no sooner became evident than an incessant struggle commenced between the rival beauties, which produced two very unequal factions among the courtiers. The countess, relying on the assurance of Marguerite de Valois, trusted to old associations to win back her royal lover, but she had miscalculated the nature of the profligate monarch—those very memories ensured her failure. In vain did she remind him that for his sake she had abandoned home and husband and child, his retort was ready—

“ But, madame, that was years ago. Time must long ere this have plucked the sting from so great a sacrifice.”

“ I have loved you, Sire,” persisted the former favourite, while the tears rained down her pale cheeks unchecked, for she remembered the early effect of those tears, “ as sovereign was never loved before—not for your crown, not for your proud name, but wholly for yourself ; and I have loved you devotedly and entirely.”

“ Not entirely, madame ; you forget the admiral.”

“ How, Sire !” exclaimed the countess indignantly ; “ because it amused me to sport with the harmless vanity of M. de Bonnivet, would you make a crime of my thoughtless gaiety ? ”

“ By no means,” said the king drily, “ whatever others may have done. But all this is idle, madame. Of what do you complain ? Have I forbidden you

the Court? Have I failed in courtesy to one of the fairest ornaments of my circle? Surely you are unreasonable."

"I am answered, Sire," said the countess, with a profound salutation and a sinking heart. "I have detained your majesty too long."

Francis replied by a bow as ceremonious as her own, and Madame de Châteaubriand, after hesitating for a moment as if to assure herself that all was indeed over between them, slowly withdrew from his side, and was lost in the crowd with which the saloon was filled; while the king, wearied by a scene in which he could not fail to feel that he had acted an ungenerous part, hastened to the side of Mademoiselle d'Heilly in order to overcome his annoyance.

Affairs of state having called Francis to Paris, the secret of the new favourite's entire ascendancy was unblushingly revealed; for at his express desire the duchess-mother, instead of inhabiting her residence at the Tuileries, took up her abode at the palace of the Tournelles, where one of the many towers whence it derived its name was fitted up with lavish splendour for Anne de Pisseleu. On the platform of the tower a pavilion had been erected, which commanded an extensive view, not only of the city itself but of the whole of the surrounding country. Windows of richly-painted glass, executed by the skilful pencil of Jean Cousin, admitted a subdued and gorgeous light, and every luxury which could be compressed within so con-

fined a space was made subservient to her caprices. This tower, which was connected with that habitually occupied by the king himself, had formerly been appropriated to Queen Claude, and had since her death hitherto remained untenanted ; but none who remembered it during the lifetime of that pure and pious lady would have recognized it when prepared for its new mistress. The dark and richly-carved oaken *prie-dieu* was replaced by a marble group from the chisel of Jean Goujon, which awakened no associations of piety ; the modest bed, with its heavy hangings of tapestry, was exchanged for a couch draped with blue velvet, and raised several feet from the floor, as if even in sleep the pampered favourite were destined to assert her triumph over the neglected queen ; rare and costly toys were scattered on every side ; and the shrine was worthy of its idol, for all around was glare, glitter, and empty pomp.

Still Mademoiselle de Heilly was not happy. Unlike the discarded countess, she had fallen without remorse. Both her nature and her education had fitted her to prove an easy victim, and her first step in vice had rather excited than satisfied her ungovernable passions. It is also certain that she never loved in Francis more than his rank, and the opportunity which it afforded for the gratification of an ambition as uncompromising as it was insatiable ; and the frail maid-of-honour was not long ere she discovered that her heart was independent of her vanity. She was, moreover, still distrustful of the

influence of her rival ; and it was consequently with unconcealed displeasure that she heard the king propose her own immediate marriage as a means of securing to her a rank at Court which should render their intimacy less remarkable, and assure to her the privileges of which she was now deprived.

"Are you so soon weary of me?" she asked, as her large and searching eyes were riveted upon him.

"On the faith of a gentleman, *ma mie*," replied Francis, "I never loved you so well as at this moment ; but I would fain save you from the lampoons of the poetasters and the jests of the courtiers."

"I scorn alike the one and the other," was the haughty retort ; "the friend of Francis of France can care little for the envious sneers of an idle rabble, be they of what rank they may ; but Anne de Pisseleu may be allowed to hesitate before she submits to the authority of a husband."

The king laughed. "There shall be no need for such a sacrifice," he said, as he pressed her fingers to his lips. "Francis of France can as ill brook a rival as Anne de Pisseleu can submit to the thralldom of conjugal supremacy ; and well you know that I have sworn to you an eternal fidelity."

"To me, in my turn," said the bold favourite, averting her head and affecting to conceal her tears.

"How now ! What mean you, mademoiselle ?" asked the monarch almost angrily. "Have I ever forfeited my royal word ?"

"I was thinking of Madame de Châteaubriand," said the maid-of-honour, with a pretty pout; "and of——"

"Enough, *ma mie*," interposed Francis with a frown. "Let the future speak for itself; it is unwise in both of us to look back upon the past. When I give you a husband I shall give you rank, wealth, and consideration, but nothing more. Can you not trust me?"

Mademoiselle de Heilly had already become aware that she had ventured too much; and accordingly she shook back her long dark ringlets with a playful gesture, and glancing at the still overshadowed countenance of the monarch with a smile, she answered the question by another still more pertinent: "But are you quite sure, even you, the King of France, that so indulgent a husband can be found? And are you prepared to convince me that this threatened marriage will not separate me from my lord and sovereign?"

"To your first inquiry I reply, Anne," said the enamoured monarch, "that the meek and careless husband is already found; and to the second, that in securing your advancement I have not lost sight of my own claims."

And Francis spoke the truth. The ready tool of a licentious master had been secured in the person of the Comte Jean de Brosse, the son of the Comte René and of a daughter of Philippe de Commynes. René had been a partizan of Bourbon, whose cause he had espoused, and under whose banner he had

fallen at the battle of Pavia. His estates had been in consequence confiscated ; and the young count, impoverished and disgraced, had, since his father's rebellion, dragged on an existence of penury and neglect by which his spirit had been broken and his pride prostrated. Of all his inheritance he had preserved only his honour, but this had hitherto remained unsullied ; and those who still felt an interest in his fallen fortunes had been accustomed to regard him with a respect and pity of which, upon the first temptation, he proved himself unworthy ; for, dazzled by the prospect of returning to the Court ennobled and enriched, he wilfully closed his eyes to the degradation by which these advantages were to be purchased, and readily acceded to the wishes of the king by consenting to become the husband of the royal favourite upon the terms which were submitted to him.

His complaisance was richly repaid ; all his estates were restored, he was appointed Governor of Burgundy, received the collar of St. Michael, was created Comte, and subsequently Duc d'Etampes, and accepted the hand of Mademoiselle de Heilly towards the end of the year 1526.

Nor had the king miscalculated the amount of his gratitude. The new duchess was exposed to no remonstrances, subjected to no matrimonial interference, but assumed the dignity of her new rank without one reproach or representation calculated to sadden her triumph or to humble her vanity. The Court, it is true, was merry at the expense of the new-

made benedict, but Jean de Brosse heroically entered upon his dearly purchased privileges, and found in ostentation and self-indulgence a lethe for his shame.

Madame d'Etampes no sooner became the acknowledged and *official* mistress of the sovereign than the whole of the Court circle were at her feet; and, had she only been known by the puerile and fulsome effusions of Marot and Sainte-Marthe, her name might have descended to posterity as that of the most gifted and virtuous of her sex; but, unhappily, poetry is not always truth. Gifted, indeed, she was, and beautiful—"Fair 'mid the learned, learned 'mid the fair," as the latter poet had justly sung; but her gifts were perverted and her beauty desecrated by vice. Envious, haughty, revengeful, licentious, grasping, ambitious, and mean, she seemed expressly created to pursue the disgraceful but brilliant career upon which she had so unhesitatingly entered.

Aware of her power over the king, the power of a strong mind over a weak one—and in his commerce with women Francis had constantly betrayed his weakness—her arrogance soon exceeded all bounds. In her respect for the duchess-mother she never failed, for she had tact enough to profit by the example of Madame de Châteaubriand, and to avoid a rivalry which might ultimately terminate in her own disgrace; but there her forbearance ended; for the excessive love and devotion of the king, and the universal adulation by which she was surrounded, so

inflated her vanity that she regarded all other enmity as trivial and unimportant; nor did she deceive herself. In a short time all Court favour and Court advancement was to be successfully sought only at her hands; and she used her influence without scruple or compunction.

Nevertheless, the royal favourite was not even yet altogether free from anxiety. She saw and felt her power, it is true, but she doubted its stability; for she was aware that her defeated rival had still a powerful supporter in the Duchesse d'Alençon, who had never ceased to exhibit her annoyance at the coldness which had been latterly evinced by the king towards her friend. Nor was this all; for another and a threatening star had arisen on the Court horizon, in the person of the superb Diane de Poitiers, who had, to use the quaint words of a chronicler of the period, "long made a hole in the roof of the château of Anet;" and abandoning her aged husband and his gloomy domain for the brilliant circles of royalty, proved how little the restraints of wedded life were suited to her free and volatile tastes.

It is probable that Louise de Savoie, although she had, as we have already shown, ceased to take an active part in the intrigues by which the time of her son was almost entirely occupied, did not see without a certain satisfaction the undisguised pleasure with which he on all occasions welcomed the presence of La Grande Sénéchale, as it tended to create a diversion calculated to render the Duchesse

d'Etampes more cautious than she might otherwise have been in exhibiting her influence over the monarch ; while the position of Diane herself, as the wife of a powerful noble, who, either out of weakness or cowardice, still continued, despite the levity of her conduct, to afford to her at least the protection of his name, gave her a marked advantage over the *parvenue* duchess, who was herself far from unconscious of the fact.

But although Francis betrayed, almost carelessly, his admiration of the magnificent Madame de Brézé, and there were not wanting many tongues which were ready to assert that from the period of her father's reprieve her veteran husband had found it expedient to remain blind to her understanding with the king, it is certain that no public or ostentatious exhibition of his preference escaped her royal admirer, who gave no evidence of seeking to rival the dissolute Court poet, or the half score of idle young nobles who sported her colours in the lists, and murmured her name over their wine cups.

And the secret was an easy one to read. Diane possessed only her beauty, for at this period she was still too unlettered in the lore of a Court to assume the semblance of a feeling by which she was not really actuated. Her nature was weak, but not yet entirely vitiated. Naturally greedy of admiration, she valued the homage paid to her attractions for its own sake, caring little for the rank of him by whom the incense was offered up. Marot sang her praises in melodious verse, and she smiled upon the reck-

less and unprincipled minstrel who ministered to her vanity. He professed to love her alone, and she did not seek to doubt his sincerity. In a word, Diane de Poitiers was still in the infancy of vice; passion had not yet seared her heart, and all that she sought to do was to live on, in the splendour of her beauty and of her triumph, trampling upon the past and careless of the future.

In this phase of her existence the monarch was to her only another and a distinct admirer. She did not speculate upon the consequences of his preference, nor seek to aggrandize herself by his smiles. Her beauty was, indeed, a barbed arrow; but her total absence of knowledge of the world had plucked away the feather by which its aim is guided. Little, therefore, at this period had Anne de Pisseleu to dread from the pleasure-loving Diane, although there were moments in which she felt disposed to apprehend the contrary; nor was the rivalry of even Françoise de Foix more dangerous, for the meek and timid countess, although still beautiful and fascinating, had lost the charm of novelty, and was, moreover, ignorant of those more refined and unscrupulous arts of coquetry in which she was herself an adept, and which were so well calculated to enthrall the profligate nature of Francis.

A struggle had, indeed, commenced between the past and the present favourite, but it was too unequal to leave any doubt of its ultimate result. The tears of Madame de Châteaubriand were far less captivating than the smiles of the Duchesse

d'Etampes ; and the regrets of the one were tedious after the blandishments of the other ; and although the betrayed countess did not venture upon reproach, she was soon taught to feel that there was a tacit rebuke in her very presence.

In vain did the Princesse Marguerite exhort her to patience, and represent the constitutional inconstancy of her royal brother ; Madame de Châteaubriand was not to be convinced ; but humiliated by the perpetual mortifications which she was called upon to endure at the hands of her rival, and which her newly-acquired rank enabled her to inflict with added facility, as well as by the neglect of the courtiers who had once been at her feet, she at length determined to make a final appeal to the affection of Francis by proposing to leave the Court.

It was a bitter expedient, for she was aware that it might fail, and then, what would remain to her of all the brilliant visions for which she had sacrificed husband and child and home, and that fair fame which, once forfeited, can never be reclaimed ? But her present position was untenable consistently with that dignity which still remained to her as a woman. The Court was made merry by daily epigrams of which she was the subject, and whose authorship she had little difficulty in tracing to the *clique* of the new favourite. Even those whom she had served in her prosperity had forgotten their obligations, for few things are more inconvenient than such memories when they interfere with present interests, and the enemies to whom she was indebted for her temporary

elevation were overjoyed at her discomfiture, and made no secret of their triumph.

The heart of Françoise de Foix was crushed within her. She was only too well aware of the nature of the reception which she must expect from her outraged husband, even should he consent once more to accord to her the shelter of his roof; and although her pride bade her take the decisive step of self-exile from that Court of which she had so lately been the idol, there were a thousand conflicting fears and terrors, and even hopes, which induced her to delay her purpose. Day after day, therefore, she lingered; but at length, on the return of the royal circle to Chambord, oppressed by insult and heartsick with disappointment, she resolved to decide her fate.

While in the capital she had already become aware that the king studiously avoided every opportunity of finding himself alone with her, and there it had been easy for him to do so; but his habits in the country were more excursive and independent, and the unhappy woman trusted even yet that in a private interview, should she succeed in obtaining it, she might awaken in his bosom some of the old and cherished feelings of the past.

The very name of Chambord was a spell in her favour. Had not the king declared that it was for her sake he desired to see his favourite retreat become splendid beyond all the palaces of France? Had he not assured her that the costly mirrors which lined its saloons were intended principally to

reflect her beauty, and the magnificent works of art in which it abounded to minister to her luxury? And yet the walls had scarcely been raised, the skill of the painter and the statuary had been but partially employed, and already another lorded it where she was to have reigned supreme.

Surely this could not last! It must be merely a frightful dream, from which she should once more awaken to light and joy! It could not be at Chambord that her royal lover would coldly sacrifice her to a rival! And then the erring wife dashed away her tears to gaze upon the costly contents of her casket, where, pillowed upon velvet, lay the glittering gems presented to her at different periods by the king, and which were of almost fabulous value. She thought not of their intrinsic worth, however, as she bent over them with dim eyes and a throbbing heart; to her they were, indeed, beyond all price, but that was simply because their enamelled setting was enriched with the device of the salamander, the crest of Francis, their entwined initials, and sundry tender mottoes, invented by Marguerite de Valois at the express request of the king for their embellishment.

How clearly and acutely did she recall the occasion upon which each had been proffered! He had clasped that bracelet upon her arm as an earnest of their reconciliation when, after having reproached her with her love for Bonnivet, he had followed up his remonstrances by engraving with a diamond that he wore upon his finger, on one of the panes of the

window near which they stood, the often quoted lines,—

“Souvent femme varie,
Mal habil qui s’y fie,”—

and had been rebuked by her silent tears. And it was here, at Chambord, that the bracelet had been clasped on! That carcanet—that ring—each had its memory, and it was for these that she valued them. They threw her back upon the past—the brilliant past—and although she loved a monarch, she was still weak enough to hope even amid her fears.

Thus had she been engaged when, on a brilliant day in summer, she saw the king traversing the parterre in front of the palace, accompanied by Primaticcio; and aware that the Italian would offer no impediment to her project, but would retire as soon as she approached, she impulsively threw on her mantle, and, hurrying to the garden, took a by-path that led immediately to the point towards which she at once discovered that they were bent. Her anticipations were correct, for on turning an angle Francis suddenly came upon her ere he had time to evade the meeting. As he recognized her he started, and involuntarily retreated a pace or two; but the countess remained rooted to the spot. Her hands were clasped tightly together, her eyes riveted upon his face, and the words, “Hear me, Sire,” escaped her trembling lips.

Thus addressed, Francis slightly raised his plumed hat and approached her, while Primaticcio

discreetly retraced his steps until he was beyond the reach of their voices.

"Were you seeking me, madame?" asked the king coldly.

"Alas! yes, Sire, and I have lately done so unavailingly," replied the countess with effort.

"If it be to reproach me that you are here, countess——"

"Nay, not so!" exclaimed *Françoise de Foix*. "Not so; who shall dare reproach the King of France? I am here only to crave one word, one little word of kindness, ere I leave the Court for ever."

"Leave the Court, madame!" echoed Francis with ill-concealed gratification. "Is not your resolution somewhat sudden? Not, however," he added with a chilling courtesy, which fell like an icebolt upon the agitated spirit of his victim, "that we would seek to detain you near us if you have other and more pressing duties. We are already too deeply your debtor for the charm which you have long, very long, thrown over our circle. Do you purpose returning to Brittany?"

Françoise de Foix pressed her hand heavily upon her heart to still its throbbings, as she answered with an ineffectual attempt at composure—"With the permission of your majesty."

"It shall not be withheld, madame, since such is your desire; and it will give us sincere pleasure to hear of your prosperity and happiness in your retirement." And once more the plumed hat was

gracefully raised from the royal brow ; a gesture of the hand brought the great artist again to the side of the king, and the dishonoured wife was left standing alone under the bright sky and the waving boughs, as Francis of France and his *protégé* resumed their walk.

And she stood there long, paralyzed alike in mind and limb. She had, indeed, in her moments of despondency, apprehended that she might be permitted to depart, but never that she should depart *thus*—without one regret—without one expostulation—without one word of tenderness or explanation. Alas, poor woman ! she had not paused to reflect that princes do not condescend to temporize when their interests are not involved. What was she now but a pebble in the path of the king, which, for his greater convenience, had been removed ? Sympathy ! Where could she look for sympathy ? The guilty have no friends. What a tide of thought and memory rolled over her brain in the brief half hour that she stood there—there, where the monarch who had lured her to her ruin had left her without a sigh !

And one gentle look, one kindly expression, might have softened the fiercest pang of this unutterable anguish, and left her at least an illusion with which to brighten the fearful future ; but the boon, poor as it was, had been denied.

Truly Francis I., the vaunted of history and the heir of fame, was a chivalrous monarch !

The same evening, in the circle of the duchess-

mother, the king announced that the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, whose health had been for some time precarious, had solicited his permission to retire from the Court ; a request to which, under the circumstances, he had reluctantly acceded. The astonishment elicited by this intelligence was universal. The eyes of Louise de Savoie and the Duchesse d'Etampes sought each other, and exchanged a look of triumph ; while the Princesse Marguerite silently averted her head, and by a powerful effort retained the tears which endeavoured to force their way. The die was, however, cast, for this public announcement from the lips of the king had effectually prevented all change of purpose on the part of the countess ; and nothing now remained for her save to depart, and expiate by a future of remorse the errors of the past.

And fearfully were they indeed expiated. Varillas and Sauval both assert that on her return to Brittany—for she offered herself on her retirement from the Court a passive victim to the vengeance of her husband—M. de Châteaubriand imprisoned her for a time in a vault beneath the château, into which the light could not penetrate ; which, added to the despair that had taken possession of her mind after her last interview with the king, rendered her weary of life, and ill able to contend against another and an unlooked-for mortification, which gave the last blow to her broken spirit.

Only a few weeks after the retirement of Madame de Châteaubriand from the Court the monarch pre-

sented to the Duchesse d'Etampes a magnificent *parure* of brilliants and pearls; but even while the eyes of the favourite glistened with delight at the costly offering, a shade gathered upon her brow which was instantly perceived by Francis, who anxiously inquired its cause.

"I admit the beauty of the jewels," said Anne de Pisseleu, "but to me they are mere stones, to be bought with gold and lost without regret: baubles, which all who are wealthy can command alike. They boast nothing distinctive. They tell nothing either of Francis of France or of her to whom his smiles are all in all. How different were the gems which I have seen upon the neck and arms of the Comtesse de Châteaubriand! There every separate ornament breathed of tenderness and devotion. Every trinket was its own history. There was a world of love upon every link and clasp of these enamelled ornaments; and you give me merely gold and stones, and would have me prize them as she valued the heart-record which rendered hers at once a memorial and a marvel."

And Anne de Pisseleu wept; and the king wiped away the tears which dimmed her bright eyes; and at length, in a moment of weakness, which betrayed him into forgetfulness of his dignity not only as a monarch but even as a man, he consented to write with his own hand to the forsaken countess, and to reclaim the gifts which had been freely offered.

Madame d'Etampes again triumphed. In her cold and selfish heart there was no place for the

sentiment which she affected. She sought only further to humiliate an already vanquished rival ; and her eyes once more sparkled as she placed before her infatuated lover the costly writing-stand of pearl and ebony which occupied a recess in her apartment. She would brook no delay in this new caprice, and the unworthy letter was completed in her presence. The restoration of the jewels was demanded, and all that Francis could do to mitigate the enormity of the meanness which he was thus induced to commit was to assert that a portion of them were the property of the Crown, and consequently unalienable.

Who shall venture to say with what melancholy rapture the unhappy countess had hung over those cherished symbols of the irrevocable past in her gloomy captivity, unvisited as it was by one word or look of kindness ? Who shall venture to imagine the pang with which she received from the hand of her imperious and disdainful husband this last mis-sive from her royal seducer. The result is, however, matter of history. In a few days the countess delivered to the messenger of the king a casket of sandal-wood curiously inlaid, which she instructed him to convey with all speed to his master ; her command was obeyed, and the casket was placed in the hands of Francis, who at once transferred it, unopened, to those of Madame d'Etampes.

The exulting favourite raised the lid with a proud smile and an eager hand, but her triumph was shortlived. The jewel-case was, indeed, full to overflowing ; gold and gems were alike there, even

to the veriest trifle which Madame de Châteaubriand had owed to the whilome liberality of the sovereign, but not an ornament remained intact. The ruin was complete. The precious stones had been wrenched from their settings, and the richly laboured ore was broken into a thousand fragments. Above them lay a letter addressed to the king. It was the last cry of a broken heart !

"Sire," ran the missive, whose contents were rendered nearly illegible by the excessive agitation of the writer, "since it has pleased your majesty to reclaim the gifts which I owed to your generosity, I restore them to you. Not a jewel or a grain of gold will be found wanting. The devices alone are absent ; and they are so deeply impressed upon my mind and so inexpressibly dear to my heart that I have effaced them, as I could not brook that they should ever minister to the happiness of another."

That Francis, egotist as he was, felt the tacit rebuke conveyed in these temperate and uncomplaining words is certain, for the casket, with its mutilated contents, was once more restored to its rightful owner.

It is probable that Madame d'Alençon might still have made an effort to restore her friend to Court had she not been at this period too much engrossed by her own sorrows to find leisure for sympathy in those of others. On the 24th of January of the same year (1527) she had, at the command of her brother, bestowed her hand upon Henri d'Albret II., the elder son of Jean, King of Navarre, and of Catherine

de Foix, from whom Ferdinand of Aragon had wrested a portion of their states during the reign of Louis XII. The marriage took place at St. Germain-en-Laye; and in the contract Francis bound himself to summon the emperor to restore the usurped territories, and upon his refusal to do so, even engaged to regain them by force of arms; while he moreover assigned to the bride, as her dowry, the duchies of Alençon and Berri, the counties of Armagnac and Perche, and all the several lordships which she possessed, either in right of her first husband or as her own personal appanage.

But once more the soul of Marguerite de Valois sickened at the tie by which she was bound, and sighed over the untimely fate of Charles de Bourbon, whose wife she had so lately hoped that she might yet become. The character of the young King of Navarre was ill suited to her own; with considerable personal bravery and good intentions, he was weak, moody, irritable, and jealous. Like the Duc d'Alençon, he was unable to appreciate the shining qualities and high-heartedness of his bride; while the princess, worn out by mortification and disappointment, was less inclined than formerly either to conceal her feelings or to put any constraint upon her tastes. Thus perpetual dissensions arose between them, which became subjects of Court scandal, and more than once exacted the interference of Francis himself. In one pursuit alone the King and Queen of Navarre exhibited the same interest, and that one was in ameliorating the condition of their subjects; an

attempt in which they were so successful that Marguerite soon became the idol of the people.

Two children were the issue of this ill-assorted union. Jean, the elder, died in 1530, at two years of age; and the second, born in 1529, was the illustrious and unhappy Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry IV.

After having invited to Bearn the most able agriculturists of France, and taught their peasantry the true value of the soil upon which they laboured, the two young sovereigns founded cities and embellished the royal residences, especially the castle of Pau, which they, moreover, surrounded with magnificent gardens; and although Henri d'Albret never ultimately attempted to reconquer Navarre, owing to the impossibility of procuring from his royal brother-in-law the promised assistance, he took such wise precautions as enabled him to preserve the remainder of his kingdom from the encroachments of the emperor.

The Court was held alternately at Pau and at Nérac, and rivalled that of France in wit and beauty, if not in splendour. The immediate circle of Marguerite herself was composed of the most lovely and the most intellectual women of the age, and of the handsomest and most gifted men. In her saloons were to be seen all the aristocracy of talent, all the nobility of intellect. Scholars, poets, musicians, and painters were her courtiers; and graciously and royally did she repay their homage. Her valets-de-chambre were Clement Marot, Bona-

venture des Periers,¹ Claude Gruget, Antoine du Moulin, and Jean de la Haye; a galaxy in themselves, who won for her saloon the designation of *the real Parnassus*; and well did it deserve its name, for there every muse had its niche and every altar its votary.

But while both art and literature were fostered and encouraged at the Court of Bearn, they were not suffered to absorb all the energies of its inhabitants. The queen, whose inquiring spirit ever sought to penetrate into the new and the unknown, had been, as we have already shown, strongly attracted by the

¹ Bonaventure des Periers was one of the first satirists of the age, and the author of several works of celebrity. He translated the comedies of Terence into French verse, and the dialogues of Plato in prose; but of the former he published only the *Andria*. These were succeeded by the *Treaty on the Four Cardinal Virtues* of Seneca, which he brought out anonymously, as well as the *Cymbalum Mundi*, to which he feared to affix his name, and which induced the arrest of his printer, Jean Morin, in whose house the whole edition of his works was seized in 1538. He had previously (in the year 1535) been appointed secretary and valet-de-chambre to Marguerite de Valois, through whose protection he was enabled to escape with a simple reprimand, although he was compelled to retire to Lyons, where instead of evincing any repentance for his imprudence, he caused a new edition of the work to be printed. Both are now extremely rare. His appointment to the household of the Queen of Navarre was occasioned by the annoyance to which she was publicly subjected from the slanders which had coupled her name dishonourably with that of Clement Marot, whom he succeeded. His end was tragical. Compelled to quit the service of his royal mistress, for whom he did not attempt to conceal his passion, he became so depressed and desperate that it was found necessary to watch him closely, in order to prevent his committing suicide. The inadvertence of a moment, however, sufficed to render all previous precaution unavailing; for, having secured an opportunity, he was found pierced by his own sword; and that so frightfully that the point of the weapon, which had entered his chest, had forced its way through his spine. In 1544 a collection of his works was edited and published by his friend, Antoine du Moulin, who then occupied his position in the Court of Marguerite.

religion of the reformers ; and among the philosophers whom she had drawn into her circle were many whose minds had been similarly influenced. To the arguments of these deep and earnest thinkers she accordingly lent a greedy ear, and she soon learnt to sympathize alike in their views and in their hopes ; while her enthusiasm was further excited by the pious eloquence of Roussel, Calvin, and Le Fèvre d'Étaples, who, while preaching the new doctrine, were themselves so thoroughly imbued by its truth as to carry conviction to their hearers.

Nor was the queen merely a passive convert to the reformed faith. She caused the Latin prayers of the Church to be translated into French, and even had the courage to place the missal in the hands of Francis himself, and to distribute it among the courtiers, by whom its use was adopted until condemned by the Sorbonne as heretical, and prohibited by a decree of parliament. She, moreover, composed a mystical poem, entitled "The Mirror of the Sinful Soul ;" but this also fell under the ban of the Sorbonne, and was only saved from annihilation by the express command of the king ; while the rage of the students was excited to so unmeasured a degree by its appearance, that at the college of Navarre a mystery was enacted, in which the princess was represented under the character of a *Fury of Hell* ; an exhibition of audacity which Francis resented by sending his archer-guard to arrest the culprits. Popular excitement had, however, reached its height, and the royal troops were driven back with violence

and insult ; nor was it until Marguerite herself became their advocate that the originators of the insult obtained their pardon.

So long as she had remained in France the princess had been compelled to act with a certain caution. She was aware that she had rendered herself unpopular by her leaning towards reform, and she feared the effect of her opinions upon the popularity of her brother ; but she was no sooner established in her new kingdom than she ceased to dissemble. She had, however, still much to contend against. Montmorency had, on one occasion, when Francis was complaining of the disaffection of the Parisians, been bold enough to declare, that if his majesty really desired to restore peace to his capital by the extermination of the heretics, he would do well to commence with his courtiers, and with some who were even more nearly allied to him, particularly the Queen of Navarre his sister ; but the indignant reply of the king convinced him that, upon this occasion, he had outrun his discretion ; and the effect produced upon the mind of Marguerite herself when the conversation was repeated to her was destined never to be effaced.

Even in her own little Court at Bearn, moreover, she was fated to endure perpetual trial and disappointment. The pious and venerable D'Etaples expired almost in her presence at the age of a hundred and one years, reproaching himself for not having remained in France, where he might have secured the crown of a martyr ; while Calvin, Marot, and other reformers, who apprehended that from the

increased feeling of hostility evinced towards their protectress they were no longer in safety even at Pau, where Henri d'Albret had begun to exhibit symptoms of distaste both to their doctrines and their presence, prepared to pass into Piedmont.

Nor were they premature in their resolution, for Marot, whose vanity was more powerful than his religion, had so undisguisedly boasted of his favour with the queen that the suspicious nature of Henri was aroused, and he reproached his wife with her levity of conduct in such unmeasured and insulting terms that she was compelled to appeal to the authority and support of her brother ; nor was it until he had so far forgotten his manhood and the dignity of his station as to lift his hand against her, that even Francis himself succeeded in protecting her from his violence.

Unstable as water, Henri d'Albret no sooner found himself powerless than he began to feel, or to affect, an interest in the opinions of his wife ; and ere long she induced him to participate in her religious exercises ; to read the Gospels, to assist in the Psalms, to listen to the sermons of the reformed preachers, and even to receive the Sacrament, which was administered in a vault of the castle ; but the conversion of the supple king was merely superficial, although it was so far serviceable to his more earnest helpmate that it enabled her to pursue her spiritual career without impediment ; and, accordingly, she multiplied her pious writings ; and the same hand which produced the Heptameron was employed on hymns and pious

poems and biblical dramas, which she caused to be represented by the professional actors at her Court.

This imprudence, however, drew upon her the animosity of the Cardinals of Armagnac and Grammont, who expostulated warmly with Francis upon the indignity which she had thus offered to the Church of Rome ; and their remonstrances were so powerful that the king found himself compelled to summon her to his presence, in order that she might justify her conduct. Marguerite obeyed upon the instant, and, attended by the Governor of Guienne, proceeded to Paris, where she was coldly and even sternly received by her brother ; but she was too well aware of her influence to lose her courage, and she replied to his reproaches, say her historians, with such admirable tact and self-possession that he declared himself convinced of her innocence of all bias towards Lutheranism, and refused to listen to the arguments of her accusers. Warned, nevertheless, by her peril, she from that moment avoided all public demonstration of her secession from the Romish Church, and contented herself by less ostentatious proofs of her conversion. She still maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with Calvin, and assisted Marot in his translation of the Psalms ; but she observed the Romish ceremony of confession, attended mass, endowed hospitals, founded an asylum for orphans, and gave largely to the poor, under the auspices of the priests.

The position of Marguerite was a false one, alike in seeming and in spirit.

CHAPTER XI

1527-30

Francis sends ambassadors to Henry VIII.—Magnificence of the cardinal-minister—The monarchs of France and England declare war against the emperor—Reply of Charles V.—The defiance—The imperial ambassador retires from France—Intemperate bearing of Francis I.—The royal letter—The imperial cartel—Burgundy, the herald-at-arms of the emperor, arrives on the French frontier—He is detained by the Governor of Bayonne—Burgundy follows the king to Paris—He refuses to remove his coat-of-mail at the gates of the capital—Francis grants him an audience, but refuses to let him deliver his message—Burgundy leaves France—The regal duel is not fought—The rival sovereigns endeavour to evade a war—Andrea Doria transfers his allegiance from the French king to the emperor—Lautrec makes a last effort to defend Genoa—The plague attacks the French army—Death of Lautrec—The siege of Genoa is raised—Pietro de Navarro and Saluzzo die of their wounds—The Comte de St. Pol is defeated in the Milanese—Italy is lost to the French—Exhausted state of Europe—Clement VII. makes terms with the emperor—Francis negotiates with Charles V.—Madame D'Angoulême and Margaret of Austria meet at Cambray, and effect a treaty—*La Paix des Dames*—Undignified concessions of Francis I.—The French king abandons his allies—Anne de Montmorency is despatched to ransom the young princes—Duprat endeavours to defraud the emperor—Queen Eleonora and the princes land in France—The king and his betrothed bride meet at Mont-de-Marsan—The royal marriage—Francis and his suite proceed to Bordeaux—Coronation of the Queen—Her solemn entry into the capital—Public rejoicings—Melancholy of the royal bride—The wife and the mistress—Infatuation of Francis I. for Madame d'Etampes—The fortunes of a favourite's family—The Duchesse d'Etampes protects men of letters—The queen and the princess—Insolent ostentation of Madame d'Etampes.

SHORTLY after the departure of Wolsey from France, Francis in his turn despatched an embassy to Henry VIII., to ratify in his name the treaty which had been concluded between the two powers, and to convey to him the Collar of St. Michael. Anne de Mont-

morency, to whom the mission was entrusted, was accompanied by a number of the first nobles of the kingdom and a body of six hundred horse, and was received at Dover by numerous prelates and men of rank, by whom he was accompanied to the capital. A guard of honour exceeding a thousand men formed his escort, and great crowds followed him to the very gates of the residence which had been prepared for his reception. Two days subsequently he was conducted to the castle of Greenwich, where the king was then residing, and welcomed with regal magnificence both by the monarch and his minister. A succession of brilliant entertainments was given; and the Princess Mary performed in several of the comedies which were enacted for the amusement of the French courtiers.

At the close of these royal festivities the French envoys were conveyed in the state barges to the palace at Hampton Court, which was at that period completed, and where they remained for several days, amazed and bewildered by a pomp which outvied that of the king himself. Gorgeous services of plate, hangings of precious tapestry, mirrors of almost fabulous dimensions, and glorious works of art crowded the interior of the building; while its immense extent and graceful architecture, together with the spacious and elaborately-designed gardens by which it was surrounded, with their stately terraces, numerous fountains, and the variety of foreign birds which peopled the gilded aviaries, excited their admiration and increased their wonder. Hence

they returned to Greenwich, where, after a farewell banquet, they took their leave of the king and the cardinal, leaving Jean de Bellay, Bishop of Bayonne, as the ambassador of Francis at the Court of England.

On the 22d of January 1528, Guienne, the French king-at-arms, and Clarencieux, who bore the same rank in England, each carrying his heraldic badge upon his left arm in order to assume it while uttering his defiance, presented themselves before the emperor at Burgos, who awaited their appearance in the midst of his barons; and having invoked the immunities accorded to their office, they proceeded to read aloud their several declarations of war, which were, although firm and definitive, nevertheless couched in temperate and even courteous terms.

The emperor listened throughout in dignified but moody silence, never betraying either by word or gesture the slightest irritation or impatience; but the ceremony was no sooner concluded than he replied with scornful irony that he could not comprehend how the King of France, who had made war upon him during six or seven years without any formal declaration to that effect, should now see fit to send him a defiance, when, as his prisoner, he was no longer free to do so; and instructed Guienne to remind his sovereign that if he were, indeed, as tenacious of his honour as he would fain have it appear, he would do well to remember and reply to a message which he had sent to him two years previously through M. de Calvimont, his ambassador.

The defiance of Henry VIII. he declared himself ready to accept, although he was aware that it had emanated from the cardinal-legate, who had never forgiven him for not having, by force of arms, secured his elevation to the popedom, as both he and the king his master, at his instigation, had urged him to do. He then delivered to the two heralds his written replies to their respective sovereigns. That which was addressed to Francis was merely a recapitulation of their mutual misunderstanding, and the several negotiations into which they had entered; but the bitterness of feeling and the jealous animosity which it betrayed were well calculated to exasperate the proud spirit of the French king.

In reply to the defiance of Henry, and the reasons he advanced for the extreme step which he had taken, Charles reproached him with his intention of divorcing his aunt, Katherine of Aragon, and thus bastardizing his daughter Mary, to whom he was himself betrothed; and declared that little confidence could be placed in the zeal which the English monarch affected for the Pope when he thus disregarded the principles of religion.

The allusion to a message which he had never received, but which had been purposely withheld from him by his ambassador, who had shrunk from the invidious task of repeating to his royal master so gross an implication upon his honour, aroused the haughty nature of Francis; and he forthwith wrote to M. de Calvimont, who was still in Spain, demanding an immediate explanation. Calvimont was, how-

ever, too good a courtier to commit himself ; and he, consequently, affected to have forgotten the exact purport of the words addressed to him by the emperor, pleading the length of time which had elapsed since the interview, and wrote a respectful request to Charles himself that he would repeat them, in order that he might be enabled to submit their purport to his sovereign.

The reply of the emperor was speedy and disdainful. He had, he said, asserted upon that occasion, as he was still prepared to do, that the King of France had basely and wilfully violated the pledge which he had given at Madrid ; and that, should he affect to deny that such was the case, he would maintain the truth of his accusation to his teeth, and with his sword. And, moreover, that he had then and there declared, that while Christian Europe was exposed to aggression on all sides, the sovereigns to whom were entrusted the lives and welfare of their subjects had no right to involve them in merely personal quarrels, which might be better and more fitly terminated by their own individual prowess—an opinion which he still maintained.

On the receipt of this intelligence the exasperation of Francis exceeded all bounds ; and in his first paroxysm of passion he caused Perenot de Grandvelle, the imperial ambassador, to be arrested, as Charles had previously done those of France and the other confederated powers ; but on ascertaining that they had been again set at liberty he revoked

the order, and on the 28th of March gave him his farewell audience, in the presence of the assembled Court.

On requesting a safe-conduct, the ambassador expressed his regret at the renewed misunderstanding that had arisen between the two countries; and while thanking the king for the consideration and courtesy which he had experienced during his sojourn in France, begged his majesty to pardon him if, in the exercise of his duties, he had ever been unfortunate enough to incur his displeasure.

Francis replied by testifying his regret that recent circumstances had compelled him to act with severity towards a person whom he so much esteemed, and whom he should always be ready to serve when occasion offered; and then, recurring to public business, he desired him to convey his answer to the challenge of the emperor.

From this dangerous service M. de Grandville, however, excused himself, alleging that his official functions had ceased, whereupon the king commanded Robertet, the secretary of state, to read aloud the cartel which he had caused to be drawn up.

This document was at once unkingly and undignified. Passion had supplanted alike prudence and courtesy in its compilation. It evinced no trace of the chivalrous feeling upon which the French monarch prided himself, but betrayed a coarse and bitter violence that was ill suited to the exalted rank of the writer:—"If you have sought to charge us," ran one passage, "with having acted towards you in

any way unbefitting to a man of honour, we say that you have lied in your throat ; and that each time you repeat it you will lie. Being resolved to defend our honour so long as we have life, and having been by you falsely accused, henceforward we shall write to you no more ; you have only to name the place, and we will meet you in arms."

Nor was even its coarseness the only reproach which must be visited upon the cartel of Francis, for it is certain that he condescended to a quibble where he elsewhere remarked:—"You have accused us, by declaring that we had pledged our faith, and that in default of that pledge we withdrew from your custody and power,"—an assertion which he must have been aware could never have been made by the emperor, who had publicly recognized his conditional departure from his dominions.

Charles V. was not slow to detect the imprudence of which his adversary had been guilty ; for after having in his reply specified the bank of the Bidassoa as the place of meeting, he remarked in allusion to this accusation:—"Such words were never uttered by us ; we never pretended to have received your pledge not to leave Spain, but only your promise that you would again return according to our prescribed agreement ; and had you done so, you would not have been wanting either to your children or to your honour. The spot which I have named," he added, with cold sarcasm, "must be familiar to you, as it was there I restored you to liberty, and received your children at your hands as pledges for the per-

formance of the treaty which you have so shamefully violated. You can advance no reasonable objection to such a place of meeting, as it is equally the boundary of both kingdoms; a single second on each side shall make the necessary preparations and select the weapons, and if you indeed value your honour you can no longer advance any pretext for failing to keep the appointment."

Charged with this missive, a herald-at-arms was at once despatched to France by the emperor, who was so far from apprehending that his adversary would evade the duel which he had himself provoked, that he applied to the celebrated Balthasar Castiglione, the author of *Il Cortegiano*, to become his second; and, in order to induce his compliance, forwarded to him a copy of the treaty of Madrid, to convince him of the justice of his cause.

The precaution was, however, unnecessary, for, from some cause of which even the panegyrists of Francis can give no explanation, every expedient that could be invented to delay the progress of the imperial herald was resorted to. He was detained at Fontarabia by the non-arrival of his safe-conduct; the Governor of Bayonne, after having inquired whether he were the bearer of the emperor's reply to the cartel of the king, and authorized to name the place of meeting, and received an affirmative answer, affected to suspect that his mission had some ulterior object, and refused to furnish him with a passport until he should receive an order to that effect from his sovereign.

Burgundy (the herald) had reached Fontarabia on the 31st of June, and was detained there upon the most frivolous pretexts until the 17th of August, when his safe-conduct was at length delivered to him, accompanied by an autograph letter, in which Francis reproved the governor for having impeded his entrance into France. Once furnished with this important document, Burgundy lost no time in journeying to Etampes, which he reached on the 7th of September; but on his arrival there he was met by Guienne, who informed him that the king was hunting at Montfort d'Amaury, and that he had received an order to conduct him to Longjumeau, where he would be apprized of the day upon which the monarch would receive his message.

At Longjumeau he was again detained for several days, until, becoming indignant at the contemptuous neglect shown to his imperial master, he insisted upon proceeding forthwith to the capital, whither Francis had removed. He accordingly set forth, still accompanied by the French herald; but on arriving at the gates of the city Guienne insisted upon his removing the tabard which he wore, and on which were blazoned the arms of the province of Burgundy. The imperial herald, however, peremptorily refused to make any such concession, declaring that it involved the dignity of his sovereign, who claimed the said province as a portion of his territories; upon which Guienne skilfully attempted to excite his fears, by declaring that his personal safety was involved in an exhibition which

would be regarded by the populace as a premeditated insult alike to the king and to the nation.

To this representation Burgundy haughtily replied that he was ready to incur any danger which might ensue; and as the French herald soon became convinced that further opposition would be useless, the imperial envoy was at length permitted to enter the city in his official garb, and at once conducted to the presence of the king, who had assembled about him in the hall of the palace all the princes of the blood, the prelates, and the great officers of state.

A cloud was on the brow of Francis, and a red spot had risen to his cheek which betrayed his irritation; nor did he suffer the herald to complete his obeisance ere he haughtily demanded if he were come to fix the place of combat.

"Sire," was the respectful but firm rejoinder, "I entreat your majesty to permit me to perform the duties of my office, and to deliver the message with which I have been entrusted by my imperial master."

"I will hear nothing, sir, until you have replied to my question," exclaimed the king vehemently. "Give me the letter of the emperor, and then you may harangue as long as you see fit to do so."

"Sire," said Burgundy, with a composure which only tended to increase the violence of Francis, "my orders were first to read the cartel, and afterwards to deliver it." And, unfolding the letter as he spoke, he commenced, in a loud, firm tone—

"His Most Sacred Majesty"—but he was not suffered to proceed further; the passion of the king could no longer be controlled, and, springing from his seat, he struck his hand violently upon the hilt of his dagger, as he shouted in an imperious tone—"How now, sir? Does your master seek to prescribe new laws to me in my own kingdom, and to introduce new customs at my Court? Is this some fresh trick of his cunning? Give me the cartel, or leave the presence as you came. I will not listen to another sentence until you have declared the place of combat."

Alarmed by the intemperate bearing of the king, Montmorency made an effort to calm his anger, but he was instantly silenced; upon which Burgundy respectfully requested that, as his majesty declined to afford him an opportunity of fulfilling his mission, he might receive that refusal in writing, and a passport to Spain.

"Let both be furnished to him forthwith," was the immediate retort of Francis, as he turned away; and after a second obeisance, more deliberate and more profound than that which he had made upon his entrance, the imperial herald withdrew.

Two days afterwards he received his safe-conduct, and a document which purported to be a report of the interview, but which on perusal he declined to accept, declaring that it conveyed no impression of the violent conduct of the king, and that his own replies had been garbled. As no attention was, however, paid to his objections, he left Paris on the

16th of September, and returned to Spain to report to Charles V. the issue of his mission.

Thus absurdly terminated an affair which had excited the attention and anxiety of all Europe, and in which it will be at once apparent that the King of France had forfeited all claim to his pretensions as the most chivalric monarch of Christendom. That he was constitutionally brave there can be no doubt, but it is nevertheless certain that many a gallant soldier would make but a sorry duellist, and that in provoking a personal conflict Francis had miscalculated his own strength. A dangerous example had, meanwhile, been afforded to the more hotheaded of the nobility, who thenceforth began to decide all their differences by single combat—a pernicious fashion, which obtained so greatly throughout France that even the edicts which were during several subsequent reigns fulminated against it failed to effect its suppression; while it spread by degrees over the whole of Europe, and has not to the present day ceased to be recognized, although the strong arm of ridicule has, in a great degree, robbed it of its *prestige*.

Charles, on his side, made no efforts to revenge the affront offered to himself in the person of his herald, but quietly suffered the whole proceeding to fall into oblivion; nor did either of the hostile sovereigns, confirmed as their hatred had now become, display any increase of vigour in their warlike operations.

Lautrec, despite the jealousy of the Italian

states, had been eminently successful in the Milanese, and had, by his interference, compelled the emperor into a capitulation with the Pope, who, after making sundry concessions, again saw himself at liberty, and took up his abode at Orvieto, where he once more offered his services as mediator between the belligerent parties ; while the Comte de St. Pol, after retaking Pavia, was suddenly paralyzed in his operations, as all the former generals of Francis had previously been, by the failure of supplies.

A still more important check was, moreover, given to the French arms by the alienation of Andrea Doria, who had so essentially served France throughout the wars, but who at length became indignant at the neglect and injustice by which he had been requited, and transferred his allegiance to the emperor. His first exploit against his late allies was the maritime defence and revictualling of Naples, which was besieged by Lautrec, in whose camp the plague was at that critical juncture making fearful ravages, thinning his ranks daily, and carrying off many of his ablest officers. As the Genoese galleys appeared in the bay, and he ascertained that they were commanded by his old friend and companion in arms, the *maréchal* was made painfully aware of the error committed by his sovereign in so wilfully disregarding the value of such an ally ; but like a brave man he only redoubled his exertions, and even when himself attacked by the pestilence, persisted in visiting the hospitals, and encouraging the troops with assurances that their monarch would

not suffer them to remain long exposed to such a complication of dangers without affording them help.

And Lautrec was sincere when he thus addressed them, for he believed firmly and loyally that Francis would never sacrifice, by a negligence at once heartless and impolitic, the advantages which had been so dearly earned; and strong in this conviction, he refused to raise the siege, even when the increased virulence of the disease confined him to his bed. Still the plague decimated his troops, and still the promised reinforcements failed; when, amid the paroxysms of his agony, suspecting that he was wilfully deceived by those about him, who declared that the epidemic had ceased its ravages, he privately questioned two of his pages, whose reluctance to reveal the truth he overcame by a threat that they should be scourged to death if they attempted to misrepresent it, and learned that the camp was one wide scene of terror and despair, that the water-springs had been poisoned, and that the grain was similarly infected which was brought in by the peasants.

Already debilitated by the fearful disease under which he was suffering, and overcome by the terrible tidings of the trembling youths, the *maréchal* clasped his hands upon his forehead for a moment, and then, uttering a deep groan, sank back and instantly expired.

The fact was no sooner ascertained than the siege was raised, and the army, under the com-

mand of the Marquis de Saluzzo, retired to Averso ; but, during the retreat, Pietro de Navarro was made prisoner, and Saluzzo himself so severely wounded that he was compelled to capitulate. All the fortresses which had been taken by the French in the Neapolitan territories were surrendered, and both Navarro and Saluzzo died of their wounds.

The Comte de Saint Pol, in the spring of the following year (1529), was equally unfortunate in the Milanese ; and after a protracted struggle, during which he narrowly escaped being taken by the enemy, his army was totally routed, and once more Italy was entirely evacuated by the French.

Europe was at this period weary of warfare. The several nations were exhausted by a struggle in which neither had triumphed. The treasury of the emperor was as empty as that of his rival. Their subjects were alike crushed to the earth by taxation and sickened by disappointment. Italy could no longer be made the granary whence each drew the necessary provisions for a large body of armed men, for years of extortion and tyranny had made her fertile plains desolate and her prolific valleys barren ; and both potentates were consequently compelled to maintain at least a semblance of peace, which afforded breathing time to their respective kingdoms.

The Pope, satisfied that he could no longer anticipate any effectual aid from France, and aware that he was too weak to contend against the emperor without extraneous support, made proposals of peace,

which were accepted by Charles V., and the treaty was ratified at Barcelona on the 29th of June ; while Francis, whose recent discomfiture in Italy had convinced him that he must fail in an attempt to liberate his sons by force of arms, no sooner ascertained the existence of this treaty than he resolved, if possible, to effect his object by more pacific measures ; and, accordingly, entered into negotiations, by which it was subsequently determined that Louise de Savoie on his own part, and Margaret of Austria on that of the emperor, should meet at Cambray and arrange the conditions upon which the French princes were to obtain their release. The 7th of July was the day appointed for the meeting of the two princesses, who, by the marriage of the Gouvernante of the Low Countries (then a widow) with Philibert II., Duke of Savoy, had become sisters-in-law.

Each of the female diplomatists was fully equal to the task which had thus devolved upon her. The duchess-mother had, since the accession of her son, been the actual sovereign of France, and could act without fear of contradiction or dissent, whatever might be the measures which she saw fit to adopt ; while Margaret, who, as it may be remembered, had been educated at the French Court, and betrothed to Charles VIII., was not only a woman of extreme tact and intelligence, but was also well acquainted with the prejudices and feelings of the country which had so long been her home, and possessed the entire confidence of the emperor her cousin.

On their arrival at Cambray the two princesses

were lodged in contiguous houses ; but not content with this arrangement, and anxious to confer together without interruption, they caused a communication to be opened between their respective dwellings, in order that they might meet at all hours without witnesses or the irksome ceremonial attendant upon an official conference. The prudence and judgment of this measure soon became manifest, for, thus released from the conflicting arguments of interested individuals, they were enabled to effect a peace, which was, owing to their agency, known as *La Paix des Dames*. Equally anxious to effect their object, they made mutual concessions ; and on the 5th of August the articles were drawn up and the treaty signed by both parties : the duchess-mother agreeing on the part of her son that he should relinquish Artois and Flanders to the emperor, withdraw his claim to Italy, espouse without further delay the Queen Eleonora, and secure to their male issue the contested duchy of Burgundy. He was, moreover, to pay, as ransom-money for the young princes, the sum of two millions of golden crowns, and to discharge the debt of the emperor to England, as well as to reverse the attainder of the Duc de Bourbon, to authorize the succession of his heirs, and to reinstate in their possessions all the French subjects who had been involved in his rebellion ; while Charles, on his part, was engaged to recognize the claim of Francis to the duchy of Burgundy, with the solitary exception of Charolois, which was to remain the property of Margaret, and was, after her demise,

to become a life-tenure of the emperor, at whose death it was again to revert to the French Crown.

The characters of the two contracting parties were strikingly exhibited in this treaty. In renouncing Italy no attempt was made on the part of Louise de Savoie to secure favourable terms for the states of Florence and Venice, which had during so long a period been the faithful allies of France ; but on the contrary she engaged that, within the space of four months, the former should swear allegiance to the emperor, and the latter make restitution of all the territory of which they had possessed themselves within the kingdom of Naples ; or, in default of such restitution, be compelled by force of arms to fulfil the obligation. The interests of the Duc de Gueldres were also abandoned, as well as those of Robert de la Mark ; and, in short, the king was pledged to desert all his allies upon his northern frontier, not even excepting Henri de Navarre, the husband of his sister. Thus the brave men who had shared his dangers, and to whom he owed the success of many a well-fought field, were recklessly left to the mercy of the sovereign against whom they had so often appeared in arms ; while Margaret of Austria refused to accede to every suggestion which threatened to involve the safety of the emperor's foreign adherents, and made the restitution of Bourbon's honour one of the salient features of the treaty.

Nor was the humiliation to which Francis was thus subjected confined to these ignoble concessions,

for, after the publication of the treaty, when Montmorency was despatched to the Spanish frontier with the money necessary to ransom the young princes, it was discovered that the Chancellor Duprat had further disgraced his royal master by endeavouring to defraud the emperor both in the weight and value of the specie destined for that purpose. This false dealing was, however, at once detected, and the mortified and indignant *maréchal* found himself compelled to delay his errand until the deficiency was supplied

The exchange was then effected precisely as that of Francis himself had previously been. From the Spanish bank of the Bidassoa the Queen of Portugal, accompanied by the dauphin and his brother, and attended by the Constable of Castile and her personal suite, embarked at the same moment that Montmorency left the shore of Navarre with the sealed cases containing the treasure. The several parties then ascended the barge which was moored in the centre of the stream, where the queen, having taken leave of her escort, entered the boat which was awaiting her, and landed in France with the princes. M. de Montpezat was then despatched to inform the king of her arrival, who was awaiting the intelligence at Bordeaux, and who immediately set forth to meet her. The interview took place in the convent of Verrières, near Mont-de-Marsan, where Francis, having briefly welcomed his betrothed wife, withdrew with his sons, in order that she might be enabled to prepare herself for their marriage, which



QUEEN ELEANOR.

Wife of Francis 1st

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was celebrated on the morrow an hour before dawn, with a haste and absence of all attempt at magnificence strangely at variance with the usual habits of the French Court.

At the close of the ceremony the royal bride was conducted to her litter, and the bridal train entered Bordeaux, whence they proceeded by Cognac, Amboise, and Blois to St. Germain-en-Laye, where they sojourned during the necessary preparations for the coronation of the queen and her solemn entry into the city of Paris; which events took place, the first on the 5th of March, at St. Denis, and the second on the 15th of the same month, when she at length received the honours due to her distinguished rank.

Once more the palace of the Tournelles and the villa of the Tuileries were loud with festivity. Banquets and tournaments succeeded each other by day, while balls and receptions occupied the night hours. The royal saloons blazed with jewels and beamed with beauty; illuminated barges rode on the Seine, and invisible musicians made one wide orchestra of the lamplit gardens; the citizens, delighted to find themselves once more in security, welcomed their new queen as the visible earnest of their safety; and the same nobles who had knelt in homage before the meek and sainted Claude were now equally assiduous in striving to obtain the smiles of her successor.

But even amid all the splendour by which she was surrounded the queen could not conceal her

melancholy. She had been deeply wounded by the nature of her reception in France, incompatible as it was with all the rumours which had reached her of the gallantry and magnificence of her enforced bridegroom ; but, although stung by the indignity to which she had been subjected, she had felt little surprise, as even during his captivity at Madrid Francis had exhibited towards her a marked coldness that appeared intended to prepare her for the neglect to which she would be consigned after her marriage. Nor had her presentiment been unfounded ; for although he never violated the respect due to her as Queen of France, his indifference was, even at this early period, so undisguised, and his levity so unrestrained, that she experienced a sense of desolation even when she formed the centre of a crowd. Still her Spanish pride upheld her, and if at times the tears rose unbidden, she drove them back, and assumed a composure that she was far from feeling. But moments were not wanting in which all her indignation was aroused ; and one of these occurred even in the midst of the festivities consequent upon her coronation.

At her first official reception she occupied the centre of the daïs, having the duchess-mother on her right hand, and the Queen of Navarre, who had come to France to welcome her, upon her left ; while the king, who should have afforded her the support of his presence, was engaged in an animated conversation with Madame d'Etampes, who, stiff with brocade and sparkling with jewels, was standing

negligently near a window, and turning at intervals a curious and almost contemptuous glance towards her new sovereign. At length, however, the name of the favourite was announced by the Mistress of the Household, and she advanced to the step of the daïs with the mien and deportment of an empress ; but Eleonora had already comprehended her position, and, outraged by an audacity for which she had been unprepared, instead of presenting her hand as the proud duchess knelt before her, she suddenly turned her head aside and entered into conversation with the Queen of Navarre, leaving the arrogant beauty to retire at her leisure. For a moment even Anne de Pisseleu felt embarrassed ; but she quickly recovered her self-possession, and as she rose slowly from her knee, she murmured in a tone sufficiently audible to reach the ear of the queen : " Ha ! is it so ? You disdain to offer me your hand. It is to be a trial of strength between us, and I accept the challenge. Your husband shall revenge me."

And that he did so there can exist no doubt, for his excessive passion for the artful favourite had blinded him to her vices. Already had she taught him that her love was to be retained only by an entire devotion ; and even while he suffered her to become the arbiter of his own actions, she betrayed him with a recklessness as bold as it was degrading. Nothing, moreover, could satisfy her rapacity ; and while distress, which amounted almost to famine, oppressed the lower classes of the citizens, she

greedily seized upon every opportunity of enriching herself and aggrandizing her family.

It is curious to trace the extent to which she succeeded in effecting the latter object, and the digression will accordingly be pardoned. Within a few years her maternal uncle, Antoine Sanguin, became the Abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire, Bishop of Orleans, a cardinal, and Archbishop of Toulouse; Charles, her elder brother, was made Abbot of Bourgueil and Bishop of Condom; Francis, the second, received the Abbey of Saint Corneille de Compiègne and the bishopric of Amiens; and William, the youngest, was elevated to the see of Pamiers. Nor were her sisters forgotten; two of them became the abbesses of wealthy convents, and the other three were married into the noble families of Barbançon-Cauny, Chabot-Jarnac, and Vertus. Numerous, also, were the cousins and distant connections for whom she provided no less liberally; and as is ever the case with individuals suddenly aggrandized, their ramifications were ere long endless; nor did one of them, even although many were, as we have shown, in holy orders, hesitate for a moment to profit by her disgrace.

One merit must, however, be conceded to Anne de Pisseleu; and as throughout her whole career we have been unable to trace any other good quality which she possessed, it cannot be passed over in silence. Educated highly for the period, she loved study for its own sake, and afforded protection to men of letters; although it must be admitted that,

wherever her passions or her vanity were brought into play, she abandoned them and their interests without hesitation or scruple. Nevertheless, it is certain that she co-operated, not only willingly, but even zealously, with the king in attracting to the Court of France all the distinguished talent of Europe, and was, moreover, able to appreciate the excellence of which it soon became the focus. But the ostentation with which she assumed to herself the attitude of a patroness was calculated to arouse the indignation of the queen, who witnessed with suppressed but deep displeasure this usurpation of her privileges.

It was not long, indeed, ere the unhappy Eleonora discovered that she was a mere cypher at her husband's Court. It was true that when she was seen in public on the occasion of some gorgeous procession to St. Denis or Notre Dame, attired in velvet and cloth of gold and sparkling with jewels, the delighted populace lustily shouted *Noël* for their stately queen; but this empty and boisterous homage was the only tribute offered to her exalted rank. The courtiers had little time beyond that exacted by the strict ceremonial of the Court to spare to one so powerless; and as it had been the pleasure of her royal husband that she should dismiss the greater number of her Spanish attendants, her solitude was seldom invaded save by the young princes, the two elder of whom had become sincerely attached to her during their detention at Madrid—an affection which she returned with equal warmth. Of these the dauphin was her peculiar favourite; for, young as he was, his calm, self-pos-

sessed, and temperate disposition was almost Spanish in its character, and she never feared from him the wild and ungoverned sallies into which his younger brothers were occasionally betrayed.

Isolated as she was, however, Eleonora scorned to complain ; and, although she ill brooked the insults to which she was daily subjected, she uttered no remonstrance. By slow degrees she withdrew herself from the more public circles of the Court, and, as the unhappy Claude, her predecessor, had previously done, she sought in works of piety to stifle the murmurs of her heart. Often as she sat at her open casement she watched with swimming eyes the gorgeous litter of the favourite, with its draperies of pale blue velvet and its train of pages, as it issued from the palace gates with almost regal pomp ; but not even to her mother-in-law, who, from motives of policy, treated her with a courtesy for which she was in a great degree indebted to the fact of her utter powerlessness to thwart her measures or to undermine her influence, did she venture to complain of the insolence under which she writhed.

CHAPTER XII

1530-31

Francis I. and the royal college—He establishes professorships—Illustrious scholars—Duprat dissuades the king from founding the college—The jealousy of Francis is excited by the progress of the Reformation—Jean le Clerc is burnt alive at Meaux for heresy—An effigy of the Virgin is desecrated at Paris—Superstition of Francis I.—The silver image—A regal procession—The king persecutes the Lutherans—Louis de Berquin is burnt alive in the Place de Grève—The ecclesiastical tribunals judge and condemn the Protestants—The Queen of Navarre intercedes in vain for the victims—Cruelty of Francis I.—Symptoms of renewed hostilities—Meeting between the pope and the emperor—They conclude a treaty—Charles V. restores the Milanese to Francisco Sforza—Indignation of Francis—Terror of the French queen—Eleonora invites a nobleman of her brother's Court to France—An interview is arranged between the emperor and Francis—Death of Louise de Savoie—Her treasure-chest—The French king liberates the territories of the Low Countries—Death of Margaret of Austria—Contrast between the two princesses.

THE pacification of Europe once more enabled Francis I. to turn his attention to the internal economy of his kingdom, and to revert to his original project of establishing a royal college; for which purpose he invited to his Court the most learned men of the age, to whom he offered the several professorships, with each a magnificent stipend. In addition to the eminent scholars to whom we have elsewhere alluded, a number of the Italian literati, who had been proscribed by the emperor for the share which they had taken in the late wars, found a ready and an honourable refuge under his protection.

Among these illustrious exiles was Luigi Alamanni,¹ a Florentine poet, who soon became so great a favourite of the king as to be not only admitted to his intimacy, but even employed upon several embassies ; Bruto, the Florentine historian ; Niccolo dell'Abbate ; and Rosso del Rosso,² who, in conjunction with Primaticcio, executed the paintings and statues of the palace of Fontainebleau ; Tagliacarno, who became the preceptor of his sons, and upon whom he bestowed the bishopric of Grasse ; and a number of other celebrated scholars, as well as a crowd of capitalists, merchants, and craftsmen, who established themselves in France and exercised in their adopted country those talents to which her manufactories have since been indebted for their superiority.

Nor was it only to foreigners that Francis proved himself a munificent patron ; for, excited by the en-

¹ Luigi Alamanni was born in 1493. Having entered into a conspiracy against Julio de' Medici, subsequently Clement VII., he took refuge in France. Henry II. continued to him the same protection and favour which he had experienced from Francis I. He left behind him a collection of poems, a didactic poem entitled *Opere Toscane*, the *Cultivazione*, *Girone il Cortese*, a heroic poem, and the *Avarchide*, a Florian comedy. He died in 1556.

² Rosso del Rosso, familiarly known as Maître-Roux, was born at Florence in 1496 ; and by the mere strength of his genius and his close study of Michael Angelo and Parmesan (*Mazzuoli*), became one of the most famous painters of his time. The grand gallery of Fontainebleau was built after his designs, which were rewarded by Francis I. with a canonry at Notre Dame. His great success at the Court of France created a dissention between himself and Primaticcio, who was jealous of the favour shown to him by the king ; and this hatred continued unabated until the death of Rosso, who poisoned himself in the year 1541, from remorse at the torments endured by his friend Pelligrino, whom he had unjustly accused of theft. Great skill in the management of his lights, grandeur of conception, fertility of imagination, and remarkable richness of colouring, are the characteristics of his style.

couragement suddenly held out throughout Europe to every species of science and scholarship, and anxious to secure the success of his new foundation by placing it under the supervision of the most learned men of the time, he spared no pains in collecting about him, and in conciliating the friendship of, every individual in France who had by his erudition rendered himself worthy of such a distinction.

Francis was not, however, singular in this laudable ambition, for all Europe, wearied of war, had simultaneously adopted the same taste. In Italy, even the political convulsions to which the country had been subjected had failed to quench the thirst for knowledge ; and thus her scholars, her artists, her sculptors, and her architects were the most celebrated in the world, and were competent to teach where others were only beginning to learn. In Florence especially every species of art and every branch of literature had attained to marvellous perfection ; and now, when diplomacy and warfare had ceased to engross the minds of the European sovereigns, each became desirous to render his court celebrated by the presence of the learned. England, France, and Germany, at length aware of the importance of intellectual cultivation, vied with each other in their efforts to accomplish this desirable end ; and thus the painter's easel, the scholar's desk, and the sculptor's studio were soon established within the walls of palaces, hitherto inaccessible to such occupants.

Fortunately for Francis, the Italian refugees, with

few exceptions, turned towards France, of which they had so long been the allies ; while even in his own kingdom he possessed many men of eminence, to whom he had shown favour from the very commencement of his reign. Foremost among these were the three noble brothers Du Bellay,¹ Budé, Guillaume Petit, his confessor, Cope, his physician, Duchâtel, Pillicier, Danès, De Selve, and many other men of mark, who soon obtained for him the reputation which he coveted.

It was principally to encourage the study of the classics that Francis had conceived the idea of the royal college, of which it may be remembered that he had offered the presidency to Erasmus so early as the year 1517 ; but, notwithstanding his great anxiety to cultivate this essential branch of knowledge, he had contented himself with selecting the site of the building, which was to be sufficiently capacious to accommodate six hundred students, and then suffered himself to be dissuaded by the remonstrances of the chancellor Duprat, who, being a man totally without erudition, and consequently unable to appreciate its value, represented to him the impolicy of diverting the public monies from their legitimate uses in order to foster a love of enlighten-

¹ The family of Du Bellay, which produced alike brave soldiers and able diplomatists, were natives of Anjou. The most famous of its members were the three brothers, Guillaume Du Bellay, one of the generals of Francis I., who died in 1565 ; Jean Du Bellay, who died in 1560 ; and Martin Du Bellay, who at his death, which occurred in 1559, left behind him his celebrated Memoirs. A relative of these distinguished men, Joachim Du Bellay, acquired great reputation as a poet.

ment which might tend to interfere with higher objects.

It is probable that this narrow-sighted view of the case was not without its effect upon the mind of the king ; for even in 1530, the period upon which we are now engaged, Francis, after having elected the several professors, left them dependent upon the university, without either a hall of study, a corporation, or even any security for the payment of their salary ; nor was the erection of the edifice commenced until eight years after his death.

That the insinuation of the crafty Duprat had not failed in its effect is moreover made apparent by the sudden distaste evinced by the king to his darling project, so soon as he discovered that as the study of the ancient languages obtained among the learned, so did the tenets of reform gain ground, and the exasperation of the monks become uncontrollable.

For a time, however, he continued to exhibit the same friendship for the studious and the scientific as ever, and refused to abandon their interests at the instigation of the sensual and indolent communities who suddenly beheld all their darling prejudices threatened, and all their ignorance revealed, by the new flood of light which was pouring in upon them ; and whose only resource was to raise the cry of heresy, and to fulminate alike against the reformed scholars and their protectors all the thunders of the Church.

The truth, nevertheless, made way ; and the same

opinions which only twelve years before had been promulgated in Germany spread themselves steadily over France, and became widely diffused among that portion of the people, perhaps of all others the best calculated to ensure their ultimate triumph. We allude to the lower classes—not only of the cities, where the mere desire to free themselves from a priestly thralldom of which they had become weary doubtless urged many to espouse the new doctrines—but also of the villages ; for the purity, the peace, and the simplicity of the reformed tenets spoke to the hearts and the convictions of those whose reason had been bewildered, and whose faith had been enfeebled, by the mysterious superstitions of their fathers. And while the good work was thus progressing among the humble and the unlearned, it made itself felt also among the more intelligent of the citizens, who could not remain blind to the vices and excesses of a depraved and grasping priesthood, whose habits of life and whose modes of teaching were alike repugnant to good sense and good feeling.

No wonder, then, that when the learned began to examine and to compare the two systems, a general alarm pervaded the whole body of the Romish Church ; for although many of them still remained within the pale of their original religion, yet all, without exception, expressed an equal disgust at the ignorance and imposture of the monks. Among the number of those who still nominally adhered to their ancient faith, while they were, in point of fact, rapidly

undermining its foundations, may be mentioned the celebrated Rabelais,¹ who, after having abandoned a monastic life for the profession of medicine, became the physician of the Cardinal du Bellay during his sojourn at Rome as the ambassador of Francis; and published in the year 1533 his novel of *Pantagruel*, and in 1535 that of *Gargantua*, in both of which he attacked with unequalled audacity alike the religion that he professed and the civil authority to which he was subservient. But while he thus overwhelmed, with a pungency of ridicule at once impious and indecent, the abuses to which no one was more keenly alive than himself, he was nevertheless too worldly-wise to withdraw from beyond the pale of a Church which he was enabled to render subservient to his interests; and despite all his offences against religion and morality, he ultimately died prebendary of Saint Maur-des-Fossés and curate of Meudon.

In like manner Clement Marot, the poet, although he rejected for a time the Romish tenets, did not hesitate on two distinct occasions to return to them; not, as in the case of Rabelais, from motives of self-interest, but from causes still more degrading;

¹ François Rabelais was born at Chinon in 1483. Originally a monk of the order of the Cordeliers, he subsequently became a Benedictine; and then, weary of the cowl, established himself as a physician, in which capacity he accompanied the embassy of the Cardinal du Bellay to Rome. During his sojourn in that city he obtained, through the intercession of the cardinal, an absolution from the Pope for the rupture of his vows; and it was to the same generous patron he was indebted for the clerical preferment which he afterwards enjoyed.

for even while, in his first enthusiasm for the reformed faith, he abandoned the composition of worldly poetry in order to translate the Psalms, he could not, or sought not to control the licentiousness of his nature; and finding the restraints imposed by his adopted creed alike inconvenient and embarrassing, unblushingly recurred to his old professions in order to pursue the libertine habits to which he was addicted. Erasmus, although less reprehensible in his motives, was equally inconsistent in his conduct; for while he pursued the Romish clergy with unsparing sarcasm, he refused to abandon the observances of their Church.

Many there were, however, who, having conscientiously and sincerely attached themselves to Protestantism, were true even to the death, and sealed their convictions by enduring with unflinching and heroic firmness the agonies of martyrdom.

Among those observances of the Romish Church against which the people had first openly revolted was that of image-worship, and so early as the year 1525, a wool-comber, named Jean le Clerc, a native of Meaux, had carried his zeal so far as to destroy several figures of saints, for which sacrilegious offence he was publicly whipped, branded with a hot iron, and subsequently burned at the stake. This event, however, created little sensation beyond the city in which it occurred; nor was it until in 1528 a discovery was made in the capital that an effigy of the Virgin in the Rue des Rosiers had been torn from its niche, defaced, and dragged through the

mud of the street, that Francis abandoned the cause of the reformers.

But even then it was rather from policy than from any religious scruple that he did so. The state of Paris had already been, as we have shown, sufficiently alarming; and this new and open violation of the law threatened an increase of the evil. Jealous of his authority, the king began to regard the Lutherans with a suspicious eye; and while he had tranquilly permitted their attacks upon the Church, he at once resented their presumed defiance of himself. Moreover, Francis, although destitute of religion, was as superstitious as the most ignorant of his subjects. Like them he had witnessed rather with satisfaction than annoyance the persecutions to which the clergy had been subjected by their new opponents, but, also like them, he held in reverence the ancient symbols of the faith which he professed; and thus, in order at once to appease the murmurs of the populace and to tranquillize his own misgivings, he caused a statue of silver of the same dimensions as that which had been destroyed to be erected in the same spot, and himself walked in procession, attended by his whole Court, to witness the ceremony of its installation.

His next care was to discover the authors of the outrage; but failing in this attempt, he turned the whole tide of his wrath upon the Lutherans as a body, declaring that the profanation which had been committed must have originated with them; and the first evidence which he gave of his determination to

sacrifice every other consideration to that of maintaining his personal authority was afforded by the re-arrest of Louis de Berguin,¹ who had some time previously been denounced to the Sorbonne by their syndic, and imprisoned in the dungeons of the college ; whence he had been released by the express order of the king and restored to liberty.

Now, however, although no further accusation had been brought against him, the unhappy student was once more consigned to a prison, and put upon his trial before twelve commissaries of the parliament, who, anxious to conciliate at once the Church and the sovereign, after a hurried investigation condemned him to witness the public burning of all his writings in the Place de Grève, to make the *amende honorable*, to abjure his heretical opinions on the same spot, and afterwards to have his tongue pierced by a hot iron and to suffer perpetual imprisonment. Without comment upon the remainder of his sentence, Berguin positively refused to utter the abjuration, and forthwith appealed both to the king and the pope ; upon which the commissaries, by an abuse of power alike unprecedented and arbitrary, denounced his appeal as a new offence, and revoking their former award, condemned him to be burnt alive—an iniquitous sentence, which was

¹ Louis de Berguin was a gentleman of Artois, and the friend of Erasmus. Of eminent talents, and zealous for the progress of learning, he wrote vehemently and powerfully against the cupidity, ignorance, and intolerance of the monastic communities, and thus drew upon himself the vengeance of the Romish Church. He was burnt at the stake in his fortieth year, in 1529.

actually carried into effect on the 22d of April 1529, without any effort on the part of Francis to save the victim from so cruel and unmerited a fate.

The death of Berguin was succeeded by a general persecution of the reformers. At Toulouse the tribunal of the Inquisition condemned no less than thirty-two Lutherans to punishments of different degrees of severity ; including imprisonment for life, confiscation of property, and death at the stake. At Lyons they were treated with equal harshness ; while at Bourges they were judged and sentenced with similar severity, and even confounded with sorcerers and magicians in order to excite against them the indignation and hatred of the populace ; and at the same time the chancellor convened a council in the capital, which included all the bishops of the diocese of Sens, in which the doctrines of Luther were not only condemned, but all the princes of Christendom were exhorted to assist in the extermination of his disciples.

Neither genius nor scholarship longer availed to save the suspected ; and Francis, who had so recently arrogated to himself the proud title of Protector of Letters, looked coldly on while some of the noblest spirits and brightest intellects of his kingdom were quenched in the unholy flames of bigotry and superstition.

In vain had Marguerite de Navarre pleaded for mercy ; in vain had she represented the irreparable injury which the king was inflicting, not only upon Europe at large by thus impeding the growth of knowledge, but even upon his own fame, by affording

his sanction to enormities so monstrous. Her warning whispers were silenced by the sterner voice of Louise de Savoie, who having, by a transition rapid and easy at that period, abandoned her former licentious pursuits for a violent and ostentatious display of religious fervour, and resolved to second the selfish designs of her favourite and confidant, Duprat (who on his side was eager to conciliate the clergy and to purchase oblivion for the excesses of the past), urged him on to acts of rigour and injustice as impolitic as they were cruel.

Such was the real patronage afforded by Francis I. to men of letters: alternately his idols and his victims, he suffered them to minister to his vanity, to celebrate his greatness, to record his victories, and to throw a halo of refinement and civilization over his Court; while they were not only forbidden to worship the Eternal and the True according to the dictates of their own hearts, but were even subjected to the most odious persecution and to the most painful and ignominious death for presuming to eschew bigotry and error, and to work out the salvation of their own souls.

In the darker ages King Robert had indeed punished religious schism by the stake, and Saint Louis had followed the fearful example of his predecessor; but since the death of the latter monarch the law, although still unannulled, had never been put into force, and was forgotten when it was thus revived by Francis I. Even his panegyrist Brantôme is compelled to admit that "it was he who

first led the way to the burning of heretics,"—a melancholy fact to record against a Christian king, and one, moreover, who affected an earnest zeal to promote civilization and general enlightenment.

Meanwhile the tranquillity of Europe was far from being so well assured as it appeared; and although the late lingering and costly wars had exhausted the resources of both Charles V. and Francis, there were many reasons which co-operated against a lengthened peace. To say nothing of the mutual jealousy that existed between the two monarchs, each had legitimate causes for discontent which neither was likely to overlook; nor were there wanting bold and adventurous spirits about the persons of both sovereigns, who sought to fan the smouldering embers of their old hatred into a new and fiercer flame.

To the emperor it was represented that Francis, whose pride he had humbled and whose vanity he had wounded, would never forgive the humiliations entailed upon him by the treaty of Cambray, but would eagerly seize the first opportunity to recover by violence the territories of which he had been deprived; and that, should he succeed in once more rendering himself master of the Milanese, he would not fail to extend his conquests to Naples and Sicily. In order to avert this calamity it was suggested by the counsellors of Charles that he should invest Francisco Sforza with the duchy of Milan, by which measure he would not only secure to himself a large amount of money, but would also conciliate the other

Italian states, who would necessarily welcome this restoration as a guarantee against the invasion of a monarch of whom past experience had rendered them suspicious, and even against the authority of the emperor himself, whose power was too formidable and overwhelming to admit of their feeling secure under his rule ; while by inducing the other princes of Italy to enter into a league with Sforza, of whom they could entertain no jealousy, he would become possessed of allies all the more valuable that they were thus divorced from the cause of France.

Many similar arguments were adduced which were not without their influence upon the mind of Charles V., who had already been urged to reinstate Sforza in the sovereignty of the duchy alike by the Pope and the Venetian senate. Shortly after the peace he had visited Italy with great pomp, and effected his reconciliation with the pontiff, towards whom he had evinced a respect and regard which were wholly incompatible with his former bearing, and who met him in the same spirit, being anxious to secure the support of so powerful an ally in his meditated vengeance upon the Florentines, by whom the Medici, his relatives, and all their adherents, had been driven from their territories.

The re-establishment of his family was accordingly one of the principal articles of the treaty between the two potentates insisted upon by the Pope. Alessandro de' Medici was to be reinstated in the government of Florence ; Ravenna, Modena, and Reggio were to be restored to the Holy See ; and the emperor

was pledged not only to assist Clement against the Duke of Ferrara, but also to aid him in restoring the power and splendour of the Church, which had been greatly weakened and deteriorated by the events of the late war, as well as in checking the progress of the Reformation.

The recompense of these concessions was to be the crown of empire which had been refused to Charles by his predecessor ; and the treaty was no sooner concluded than his coronation took place with great splendour (on the 22d of February 1530) in the church of San Petronio at Bologna. After the ceremony the emperor proceeded with the same magnificence to Barcelona, where he embarked for Genoa ; and in the latter city he received the congratulations of the papal legates and the representatives of the several Italian princes. He then pursued his way to Placenza, where he gave audience to Francisco Sforza, and fulfilled his promise to the pontiff by ensuring to the duke the restoration of his duchy, on condition that he should pay the sum of nine hundred thousand ducats as compensation money, and leave the fortresses of Milan and Cremona in the hands of the imperial generals until the whole of the debt should be discharged. In order to secure the fidelity of his new vassal, Charles moreover promised him the hand of his own niece, the daughter of the King of Denmark, who had been deprived of his kingdom ; and a few months subsequently the marriage was solemnized.

Thus it will be seen that Francis had tangible

cause for displeasure. The emperor had entered into two several treaties, both of which seriously affected the interests of France. He had secured the alliance of the Pope, the Venetian states, the Italian provinces, and, above all, the Milanese ; and he had also, through his agents, tampered with the Swiss and the Grisons, and weakened their allegiance to the French Crown.

But of all these injuries, that which rankled the most deeply in the heart of Francis was the cession of Milan to Francisco Sforza, a man without honour or probity, and of mean extraction ; while he was himself the husband of the emperor's sister, the monarch of a powerful nation, and, as Charles was well aware, coveted the possession of that duchy, which he considered as a portion of his own territories. Had the emperor retained the Milanese under his own authority, the French king could only have complained of his injustice in thus withholding from his children their legitimate inheritance ; but in thus transferring its sovereignty to a petty Italian prince, he had subjected Francis to the greatest indignity which it was in his power to inflict, and which wounded him the more deeply that he had been totally unprepared for so wanton and gratuitous an insult.

Nor was this the only evidence afforded by Charles of the indifference with which he regarded the claims of the French crown ; for he had, in like manner, ceded the countyship of Ast to the Duke of Savoy, although aware that it was the ancient patrimony of

the house of Orleans; while in addition to these glaring demonstrations of his contempt for the weakened power of his late prisoner, he had failed to redeem the pledge that he had given for the restoration of several of the attendants of the young princes during their detention at Madrid, whom he had sent to the galleys, and who still remained prisoners.

Yet, despite all these provocations, Francis was anxious to avoid a renewal of hostilities, and once more sought to avert aggression by diplomacy,—an attempt in which he was encouraged both by Louise de Savoie, whose health at this period began to fail, and by the queen, who was overwhelmed with terror at the prospect of a war between her husband and her brother. It was consequently arranged that Eleonora should request the presence of Courbaron, a gentleman of the emperor's Court, in France, ostensibly to conclude a commercial treaty between the French and the Genoese; but actually, through her influence, to induce a meeting between the two sovereigns.

After repeated interviews Courbaron accepted the mission, and the emperor affected to accede to the solicitations of his sister; but it soon became evident that he had no intention of affording to Francis the advantage of a personal interview; a fact of which the French king felt so well assured that he availed himself of the death of his mother, which occurred during the progress of the negotiations, to suggest the postponement of the meeting.

In the spring of the year 1531 the health of Madame d'Angoulême had become extremely precarious, and some cases of plague having occurred during the summer at Fontainebleau, where she was then residing, she determined to proceed to Romorantin; but on her arrival at the village of Gretz in Gratinos, her illness increased so alarmingly that she was compelled to abandon all idea of her projected journey, and to summon her physicians. A short time before her death she was startled by an extraordinary light in her chamber, and reprimanded her attendants for their carelessness in making so large a fire, when they assured her that what she saw was merely the reflection of the moon through the curtained window. Still unconvinced, she desired that the hangings might be drawn aside, and on raising herself upon her bed to ascertain the truth, she discovered that the glare by which she had been inconvenienced proceeded from a comet which was at that moment traversing the heavens. As she gazed wildly upon the brilliant meteor, she fell back despairingly upon her pillow, declaring that it was the harbinger of her death, and desiring that her confessor might be immediately introduced. In vain did her physicians expostulate, assuring her that the virulence of her disease had abated, and that they had confidence in her recovery; they could not shake her conviction, or overcome the superstition by which she was prostrated. The confessor accordingly approached her bed, and administered to her the last sacraments of the Church; a few hours of calm

succeeded, and then, towards evening, on the 29th of September, she expired, in her fifty-fourth year.

The embalmed body was conveyed to St. Denis, where it was laid in a superb mausoleum which the king had caused to be constructed ; the heart and the entrails were carried to Notre Dame, and deposited under a plate of metal, and all that remained of Louise de Savoie, so long the sovereign of France in all save the mere name, were the treasures which she had accumulated during her career of power. But what a fearful tale did they tell of extortion, injustice, and selfishness ! The Milanese had been lost for want of supplies, the energies of a whole army paralysed, the blood of thousands sacrificed, the dignity of her son insulted, and the nation prostrated by famine, and her private chest was found to contain the enormous sum of fifteen hundred thousand golden crowns ! The captivity of Francis had been her work, but she had forgotten while gloating over her ill-gotten hoards that she was a mother. The victims of the sword and the pestilence had alike been the offerings which she had accumulated at the altar of her sordid deity ; avarice and hatred had enabled her to do the office of the destroying angel, and she had heaped up curses where she might have garnered blessings.

At the death of his mother Francis found himself more wealthy than he had ever been since his accession to the throne ; and one of the first uses to which he applied a portion of his unexpected inheritance was to liberate the territories of the Low Countries,

which had been mortgaged to the emperor in part payment of his ransom.

In the brief period which had elapsed since the conclusion of the treaty of Cambray, Louise de Savoie had already been preceded to the tomb by Margaret of Austria, the *Gouvernante* of Flanders, who died at Malines on the 1st of December in the previous year, only fifteen months after the completion of that unhappy and ill-omened negotiation.

The daughter of Maximilian left no treasure with which to enrich her heirs, but tears were wept above her bier that gold could not have bought, and her memory was embalmed in the hearts of those to whom she had been alike a firm friend and an indulgent protectress.

CHAPTER XIII

1532

Francis endeavours to annex the duchy of Brittany to the French Crown—The Bretons resist his claim—Louis des Desserts undertakes to secure their consent—The states of Brittany are assembled at Vannes—Francis proceeds to Châteaubriand—Reconciliation of the count and countess—Francis presents two estates to his old favourite—The dauphin is proclaimed Duke of Brittany—Francis erects new palaces—The château of Madrid—The Queen-Dowager of Hungary is appointed Gouvernante of the Low Countries—Henry VIII. and Francis I. enter into a defensive alliance—Clement VII. refuses to sanction the divorce of Henry VIII. and Katherine of Aragon—Unpopularity of Henry VIII.—Diet of Spires—Ferdinand of Austria is elected King of the Romans—Contempt evinced by Charles V. towards the German Protestants—The League of Smalkalden—The Protestant princes apply to France and England for support—Courteous reply of Francis—The king of Hungary sends ambassadors to the French Court—Policy of Francis—The French ambassadors to England negotiate a meeting between the two monarchs—The royal interview—A treaty is signed by which both sovereigns bind themselves to a crusade against the Turks—Indignation of Henry VIII. against the Pope—Caution of the French king—Jealousy of Charles V.—Francis is summoned by the emperor to despatch an army against Solymán—He refuses—Charles V. compels the Turks to retreat—Francis deceives Henry VIII.—Francis offers the hand of the Duc d'Orleans to Catherine de' Medici—Incredulity of the Pope—He consults Charles V.—The Emperor and the Pope meet at Bologna—Alarm of Francis—Two French bishops are despatched to threaten Clement VII.—Henry VIII. returns to England.

THE persecution of the reformers and the negotiation with the emperor were not, however, the only subjects by which the mind of Francis was absorbed during the year 1532. One of the darling projects both of himself and his mother had for several years past been the annexation of the duchy of Brittany to the throne of France, to which they adhered still

more stringently from the fact that Queen Claude had, by her will, devised it to her elder son, the dauphin, with the reservation of its revenues to the king her husband during his life. The legality of this will was, nevertheless, disputed by the Bretons, who affirmed that she had no right to make such a disposition, inasmuch as a clause in the marriage-contract of Anne de Bretagne distinctly set forth that it was to become the inheritance of the younger instead of the elder of her children ; and, jealous of their privileges, they demanded the maintenance of their independence, refusing to allow the king to govern them in any other capacity than that of their duke, and in conformity with their own constitution, reserving to themselves, moreover, the right, should an opportunity present itself, of separating the duchy from the crown, either by causing it to devolve upon the last-born of the princes, or by maintaining the claims of the female line.

Francis, who foresaw that the attitude thus assumed by the Bretons might hereafter cause the province to become a fruitful subject of contention, was anxious to secure its tranquil possession ; and to this end many suggestions had been made, the whole of which were successively abandoned, from a dread of awakening their alarm. But still, even although the advice and influence of Louise de Savoie were now lost to them, neither the king nor his minister was willing to abandon so essential a measure ; and at length the wily Duprat succeeded in securing the confidence of Louis des Desserts, the president of

the Breton Parliament, who possessed immense influence over the minds of his compatriots, and who, dazzled by the bribes and promises of the chancellor, consented to exert all his energies to induce the result at which he aimed.

Duprat had little difficulty in convincing the king of the absolute necessity of completing the arrangement during the minority of his sons, who, then aged respectively only thirteen and fourteen years, would not venture to interfere with any measures which he might see fit to adopt; while, should the affair remain in abeyance until they reached maturity, it might involve a conflicting interest dangerously antagonistic to his views, and, should the younger prince be enabled to induce the Bretons to sustain his pretensions, would, in all probability, originate a civil war, or even foreign interference, after his death,—a consideration to which Francis was no sooner aroused than he gave the astute minister full powers to act in his name, and upon his authority, as he might deem best suited to ensure success. Thus empowered, Duprat at once acquainted his royal master with the influence which he had obtained over Des Desserts; and as no better or more feasible alternative presented itself, it was resolved that his services should be secured at any cost. Nor did the Breton president disappoint the hopes that he had raised; for by his eloquence in representing the extreme peril to which the duchy was exposed by the perpetual wars that were devastating Italy, and the consequences entailed upon their own province, to-

gether with heavy bribes, and prospects of Court favour to the most influential of the ducal nobles, he succeeded in prevailing upon the States themselves to propose their annexation to the king.

This object was no sooner attained than they were convened at Vannes (in August 1532); while in order to receive their overtures more courteously, and to render himself popular in their immediate neighbourhood, Francis proceeded to the castle of the Comte de Châteaubriand, who, having at length become reconciled to his erring wife, gave him such a welcome as was due to a sovereign from his subject—an act of loyalty for which the king royally repaid him by presenting to his old favourite the valuable estates of Rhuis and Sucinio.

The result of the assembly was the proclamation of the dauphin as Duke of Brittany under the title of François III., and a declaration that thenceforward the duchy was irrevocably united to the French throne, without retaining, upon any pretext, the power of future separation; but, in order still to preserve some shadow of the privileges which they had thus voluntarily resigned, letters-patent were previously drawn up, by which Francis bound himself to confirm all the ancient rights of the province, and guaranteed that no levy of specie should be made within its boundaries which had not been formally sanctioned by the States themselves.

The temporary peace enabled the king to pursue all his favourite avocations, among which that of building new palaces and embellishing old ones was

conspicuous. Magnificent commencements were manifest at the Louvre; Fontainebleau was daily increasing in splendour; St. Germain was a favourite residence of majesty, and was enriched by many precious productions of art; the little château of La Muette, in its silent valley, had invaded one of the sweetest solitudes in nature; the hunting-seat of Chalna, in the Gatinois, rose amid the stately and overarching trees of the forest; the graceful pavilion of Follembray, in Picardy, was the retreat of pleasure and intrigue; Chambord was truly regal alike in its dimensions and its decorations; Villars-Coteret was erected to indulge a caprice of Madame de Châteaubriand during her period of favour; and even the Bois de Boulogne, at the very gates of the capital, was embellished by an extraordinary edifice, to which Francis gave the name of the Château of Madrid.

The purpose of the king in building this eccentric retreat was never clearly defined, although it gave rise to much conflicting conjecture. Some of the old chroniclers affirm that it was constructed upon the model of the castle to which he was transferred after his betrothal to Eleonora and his removal from the Escorial, and that to this circumstance it owed its designation. The fallacy of this assertion is, however, easily proved, the whole aspect of the château discountenancing such an idea. It stood in the centre of an enclosed park, about two leagues in circumference, and was laden with ornaments. Statuary and pictures abounded within, while the whole of the exterior was encrusted with glazed and

painted bricks, the work of the celebrated Bernard Palissis,¹ which produced an effect rather dazzling than regal. The building was in form a solid square mass, but it was so skilfully distributed within that it presented several distinct sets of apartments, which rendered each of its occupants totally independent of the interference and surveillance of the other inhabitants. This circumstance gave rise to a second assertion, that the king had erected it, and afterwards bestowed upon it a name which could scarcely have been to him altogether devoid of certain distasteful associations, because in the entire privacy which it afforded it bore a striking resemblance to his Spanish prison. Others, again, averred that it was intended as an architectural sarcasm, or, as it might more properly have been called, an undignified and contemptible subterfuge of Francis, who, upon several occasions during his frequent visits to his suburban palace, when expatiating upon the pertinacity of the emperor in urging his return to Madrid in accordance with the pledge that he had given, was

¹ Bernard Palissis, or Palissy, was born in the diocese of Agen, in 1500, of parents whose extreme poverty deprived him of all means of acquiring even the most slender education. He became a house-porter at Saintes, where he invented the art of enamelling earthenware, and moreover acquired, unaided, an amount of knowledge which soon drew upon him the attention of his townsmen. His fame having reached the ears of Francis I., he was invited to Paris, where he ultimately became Steward of the Tuileries. He was an ardent reformer, and resisted all the efforts made by Henry III. for his conversion to the Romanist faith. He died in 1590, leaving behind him two remarkable works, which have now become extremely rare : *Le Moyen de devenir riche par l'Agriculture*, and *De la Nature des eaux et fontaines, des métaux, sels et salines, des pierres, des terres, du feu, et des émaux*.

wont to say with a bitter smile, " His reproaches are alike unjustifiable and misplaced ; for, on the faith of a gentleman, I am at Madrid at this very moment."

Meanwhile Charles V., feeling the necessity of appointing a successor to Margaret of Austria as *Gouvernante* of the Low Countries, decided on conferring the vacant dignity upon his sister Mary, the widowed Queen of Hungary, and he accordingly proceeded to Flanders to effect her installation ; but as he sojourned there for a greater length of time than such a ceremony appeared to demand, both Henry VIII. and Francis I. became alarmed, and on the 23d of June they concluded a treaty of mutual defence, and arranged the preliminaries for a personal interview towards the close of the same year, in order that they might severally decide upon such measures as should appear necessary to their own safety.

His mistrust of the intentions of the emperor did not, however, deter the English king from thwarting all the measures of the Pope ; and although he entered into a personal controversy with Luther, and even produced a work which obtained for him the title of Defender of the Faith, he nevertheless had learnt in the course of his researches to entertain doubts of the papal infallibility ; and he no sooner became convinced that Clement VII., at the persuasion of the emperor, had resolved definitively to refuse to sanction his divorce from Katherine of Aragon than he openly denied it, although he nevertheless continued to persecute the reformers. The arrest of Wolsey

tended effectually to alienate the Romanist party from his interests ; while the virulence with which he pursued the Lutherans made them also his enemies, and thus he became more than ever anxious to secure the alliance and friendship of the French king, who, although totally free from religious scruples, felt his dignity also offended by the pretensions of the pontiff to a supremacy which involved the rights of his own crown ; and consequently, in order to widen the breach between Henry VIII. and the emperor, he advised him to make Anne Boleyn his wife without any reference to the assumed authority of the Church.

Meanwhile Charles V. had completed the exasperation of the German reformers, shortly after his return from Italy, by convening a diet at Spires, which he caused to be presided over by his brother Ferdinand, who had recently through his influence been elected King of the Romans, and at which a decree was passed insisting upon the observance of a former one made at Worms, and stringently enforcing the observance of the mass, and every other ceremonial of the Church, until the Pope should have held a formal council, and deliberated upon the final measures to be adopted. Upon the promulgation of this decree the independent princes of Germany had immediately assembled, uttered a solemn protest against his authority, and exchanged a pledge not to assist the emperor in any war, either offensive or defensive, which he might undertake, until the edict was revoked

The Protestants, as all reformers were thencefor-

ward indiscriminately designated, next sent deputies to Charles to explain alike their motives and the decision at which they had arrived; but their remonstrances were treated with contempt, and in 1530 the emperor held a diet at Augsburg, where Melancthon was employed by the reformers to embody in writing the immortal profession of their faith, known as the Confession of Augsburg, which, having received the signatures of the several princes, was delivered to Charles, who, although he still affected to disregard their coalition, had nevertheless taken instant measures to weaken the power and to destroy the authority of its members by depriving them of all their religious and judicial privileges, moreover threatening those who refused to recur to their original faith with confiscation, exile, and even death.

Ferdinand of Austria had been proclaimed King of the Romans on the 5th of the following January, notwithstanding the opposition of the Protestant electors, who immediately became convinced that they should thereafter have to contend against another and an equally virulent enemy; and they accordingly assembled in person at Smalkalden, a petty town in Franconia, whither the emperor had already convened their deputies and entered into a treaty of defensive alliance, entreating by letter both Henry VIII. and Francis to assist them in the maintenance of their rights and the defence of their liberties.

To this request the French king had not only acceded, but had also assured them that he enter-

tained no doubt of the co-operation of his brother of England; and about the same time he had also received with marked courtesy the ambassadors despatched to his Court by John Zapolsky,¹ Count of Sépus, whom the Hungarians had elected as their king, and who was anxious to form an alliance with one of the princesses of France, as well as to obtain a loan. Their embassy was successful, for Francis, with sundry professions of friendship towards the new sovereign, not only consented to bestow upon him the hand of Madame Isabeau, the sister of the King of Navarre, but also forwarded to him a sum of money on condition that he should not invade the territories of any of the allies of France, or make war upon them, or in any extremity, or under any provocation, avail himself of the assistance of the Turks, as by countenancing the entrance of the Infidels into Christendom he would draw down upon himself the vengeance of the French nation.

By this subtle stroke of policy Francis succeeded in rendering the Hungarian monarch powerless, for he was well aware that his only enemy was Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and that the Sultan

¹ John de Zapolsky, Vayvode of Transylvania, was appealed to by the Hungarian nobility to suppress the brigands who infested their country; and in recompense of his prompt and effective services, had been elected as the successor of Lewis II. in 1526. His election was opposed by Ferdinand of Austria, who was also ambitious of the crown; and after a war which lasted for several years the two rivals entered into a treaty (1536), by which each remained in undisturbed possession of the territories which he had conquered during the feud. Zapolsky died in 1540 without bequeathing the kingdom to his son, John-Sigismond, who inherited only the sovereignty of Transylvania, and who died without issue in 1571.

was his fast friend ; while it is moreover asserted by Garnier that at the very moment in which he insisted on these terms, to the extreme edification of his subjects, he was already himself in secret correspondence with the Mussulmans.

Towards the end of the summer Guillaume du Bellay (Seigneur de Langes) and M. de la Pommeraye, the two French ambassadors at the Court of London, arranged with Henry VIII. the period and place at which the meeting should be held which had already been decided on between himself and their own sovereign. Montmorency on the one side, and the Duke of Norfolk on the other, were entrusted with the arrangement of the ceremonial ; and when all was duly prepared Henry proceeded to Calais, while Francis took up his temporary residence at Boulogne. On the 20th of October the two kings met on the boundary of their respective territories, where the French monarch presented the dauphin and the Duc d'Orleans to his royal ally. Henry was attended by the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Earl of Richmond, and a splendid suite of nobles and gentlemen ; while the Duc de Vendôme and the Comtes de Saint-Pol and de Guise, with all the first nobility of France, were in the train of Francis.

So soon as the first greetings were over, the French king conducted his royal guest to Boulogne, where he was received with a salute of artillery ; and thence the courtly party proceeded to the abbey, an immense and majestic pile, having two wings connected by a stately hall which served as the refectory

of the monks, but which was on this occasion hung with costly draperies of tapestry and roofed with scarlet silk. One of the wings of the building was appropriated to the English monarch, while the other was occupied by Francis himself. The two kings dined apart, after which they retired to a private cabinet, where they remained closeted together for a considerable time. On the morrow the magnificent hall was prepared for the banquet, with a profuse display of gold vessels richly inlaid with jewels, and throughout the entertainment both the sovereigns were served by their respective officers on their knees. At the termination of the repast they attended mass in great state, after which Francis presented to his royal guest six superb horses, and the English king transferred to the young princes the three hundred thousand crowns which were due to him by their father. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk then received from the hands of their distinguished host the collar of St. Michael, a courtesy which Henry returned by conferring upon the Maréchal de Montmorency, and Philippe de Brion-Chabot, Grand-Admiral of Boulogne, the order of the Garter.

At the end of several days, divided between business and festivity, the two Courts removed to Calais, where Francis became, in his turn, the guest of his brother monarch, and where the same profuse magnificence was exhibited; and, finally, a treaty was concluded, and immediately rendered public, by which they bound themselves to supply an army of

eighty thousand men, wherewith to resist the invasion of Christendom by the Turks. The result of their private conferences was, however, more intimately connected with their own interests. Henry, irritated at the attitude assumed by Clement VII., frankly declared his indignation, affirming that his marriage was invalid, as he had the authority of the Gospel for what he had decided, and that the Pope had no legitimate claim to the supremacy which he assumed. Well aware, also, of the besetting weakness of his listener, he conjured him never again to condescend to the humiliation of kissing the toe of a bishop of Rome, and represented how much the dignity of a crowned king suffered from so great a concession. He, moreover, complained bitterly of the pride of Clement VII., who had endeavoured to compel him either to proceed to Rome in person to solicit a papal dispensation for the divorce he sought, or to despatch thither an accredited plenipotentiary authorized to act in his name; and, finally, he proposed that a general council should be immediately convened, to which the pontiff should be summoned by ambassadors from England and France, and called upon to redress the grievances of which the princes of Christendom had now such serious reason to complain.

Francis, however, was careful not to commit himself. He had been apprized by the Cardinal de Grammont that the Pope was desirous to secure an interview with him either at Nice or Avignon, immediately the emperor should have returned to Spain;

while the cardinal, moreover, urgently entreated that he would not take any definitive step until he should have informed himself of the disposition of the pontiff. Nevertheless, he admitted, in reply to the representations of Henry, that he also had great cause of complaint against Clement VII., and expatiated largely upon the interference of the pontiff with the internal economy of the French Church, his failure in fulfilling his pledges, and the exorbitant outlay to which his government was compelled by the fees which he was required to give to all the ushers, chamberlains, and prothonotaries of Rome, whenever he found it necessary to ask any favour at the hands of the Pope. After which, reverting to his more personal injuries, he expressed his indignation that Clement should so readily have credited the report that he was secretly allied with the Turks, while he had, on the contrary, spared no pains to justify his holiness on every occasion where blame had been attached to him by other princes; and, finally, he expatiated in no measured terms upon the menaces, the intrigues, and the secret cabals by which the Court of Rome had endeavoured to detach from his interest the most faithful of his allies.

Charles V., who had been apprized of the reception given to the Hungarian envoys, as well as of the reply which Francis had addressed to the Protestant princes, became, in his turn, suspicious that a conspiracy was forming against himself; a suspicion which the present meeting between the two kings, his declared enemies, tended to strengthen; and as

it had become known that Solyman II. was about to attempt an invasion of Germany, he resolved to satisfy himself of the truth by testing, without further delay, the sincerity of the French monarch. With this view he consequently summoned Francis to furnish an army against the Turks ; a demonstration to which he was solemnly bound by the treaty of Madrid, which he had repeatedly declared his readiness to make, and to which he had moreover just newly pledged himself in the treaty effected with the King of England ; but in reply to the imperial requisition the French sovereign, after numerous assertions of his zeal for religion and his eagerness to assist in so noble and pious an enterprise, contented himself by offering to march a force of fifty thousand men to Italy for the protection of that country, while the emperor secured the safety of Germany ; the Hungarian frontier being, as he affirmed, too distant from France to render it expedient for him to despatch a body of troops to that point.

His proposal was, as he had foreseen that it would be, instantly and definitively declined ; and the emperor, convinced of the utter futility of anticipating any available assistance from France, immediately took the field in person, and succeeded in compelling the retreat of Solyman without even a hostile meeting.

There can be little doubt that the engagement made by Henry and Francis to join the crusade against the Infidels was merely intended to avert

the odium which their supineness was calculated to draw down upon them, and to delude the other Christian princes into a belief that they were ready to sacrifice more intimate interests to the defence of their religion; for it is certain that they never evinced the slightest intention of fulfilling their voluntary compact.

Never, perhaps, was the bad faith of Francis more conspicuous than throughout the whole period of his conferences with the English king; for, even while he promised his support to the reformers, and induced Henry VIII. to follow his example, he had already entered into a correspondence with the Pope, requesting that they might meet in order to confer on the affairs of Christendom, and offering the hand of Henri, Duc d'Orleans, his second son, to Catherine de' Medici, the daughter of Lorenzo II., Duke of Urbino, the niece of the pontiff.

Startled by the prospect of an alliance so infinitely above his hopes, Clement hesitated how to reply, for he doubted its sincerity and suspected some covert treachery; and, while under the influence of this distrust, he communicated the proposal of Francis to the emperor, who, equally convinced that it was intended only as a lure, advised him to follow up the negotiation, and thus entangle the French king in his own toils. But Charles was unaware of the policy which had dictated the offer. Francis still coveted the possession of Italy, and, regarding the Pope as the pivot of Italian politics, he looked upon his friendship and alliance as the corner-stone of success. To secure

these he consequently considered no sacrifice too great; and hence the proposal which had been received with so much suspicion both by the pontiff and the emperor. As, however, even while pursuing the negotiation, Clement VII. had evinced no anxiety to bring it to a conclusion, Francis resolved to maintain his friendly understanding with the English king, and to secure his assistance in extorting from the fears of the Pope what he could not obtain from his favour.

An opportunity soon presented itself of effecting this stroke of policy, for the two monarchs were still at Calais when intelligence reached them that Charles V., having terminated his campaign against the Infidels, was about to leave Germany and to repair to Spain through Italy, where he was to be met at Bologna by the Pope. Alarmed at the consequences of such a meeting at that particular juncture, it was immediately proposed by Francis, and agreed by Henry, that the cardinals of Tournon and Grammont should be despatched to accompany the sovereign-pontiff—an attendance which he could not refuse from two princes of the Church; and that they should be authorized to inform him that the Kings of England and France were prepared to demand a general council, in default of which they would convene distinct assemblies within their own kingdoms, when, in the event of this measure being forced upon them, they should prohibit their subjects from forwarding money to Rome. That, moreover, should the pontiff persist in pursuing with his censure the

Most Christian king and his realm, and his majesty find it expedient to repair to Rome in order to obtain his absolution, he would do so with such a train of followers that his holiness would easily be induced to satisfy his demand ; and they were also instructed to remind him of the religious anarchy which existed not only in Germany and the Helvetic states, but throughout the whole of Christian Europe, and to bid him reflect upon the diminished influence of the Romish Church ; as well as upon the fact that, should two of the most powerful sovereigns of Christendom forsake his interests because they had been denied the justice which they demanded, they would infallibly find so many other princes ready to make common cause with them, that the result must be fatal to his authority.

After this combined declaration the two kings took leave of each other on the 30th of October, on the same spot where they had met, and with every demonstration of cordiality and affection ; M. de Montpezat, the fortunate adventurer, who, after the battle of Pavia, had officiated as valet-de-chambre to Francis in his captivity, and who had been appointed one of his chamberlains, accompanying Henry VIII. to England as the ambassador of his sovereign.

CHAPTER XIV

1533-34

The Pope desires to conciliate the French king—His personal ambition—A meeting is arranged between the Pope and Francis—Francis makes overtures to the Duke of Milan—Untoward affair at Milan—Maraviglia—His arrogance awakens the suspicions of Charles V.—Treason of Sforza—A lacquy of Maraviglia challenges the Milanese, Count Castiglione—Murder of Maraviglia—Indignation of the French king—Duplicity of Sforza—The duke's envoy is dismissed with ignominy—Charles V. bestows the hand of the Princess Christina on the Duke of Milan—Death of the duke—The Duke of Wurtemberg solicits the support of Francis against the emperor—Du Bellay intercedes for the young duke—Confirmation of the peace of Nuremberg—The Pope proceeds to Marseilles to meet the French king—He is received with great pomp—Homage is rendered by Francis to the pontiff—The Latin oration—Henry VIII. despatches Bishop Bonner to the Pope—Charles V. endeavours to prevent the marriage of Catherine de' Medici—The marriage is solemnized by the Pope—The boy-cardinal—The Pope returns to Italy.

THE two French cardinals did not reach Bologna, whither the pope and the emperor had already preceded them, until the 4th of January 1533; and they soon became aware that all the menaces with which they were charged might be left unuttered, as the pontiff was avowedly anxious to secure the friendship of their royal master, even declaring that he should scarcely consider any sacrifice too great by which he might regain it. And there can be no doubt that he was sincere when he made this assertion; for, infirm as he might be in purpose, and timid in the maintenance of his privileges and power, when he was

required to support his pretensions by force, he was by no means deficient in the more subtle science of diplomacy, and readily comprehended that, should Francis in reality hold himself bound to fulfil the contract into which he had entered, he could anticipate no equivalent advantage at the hands of the emperor.

Clement VII., like his kinsman and predecessor in the papal dignity, Leo X., was devoted to the interests of his family, and his ruling passion was the aggrandizement of the house of Medicis. He had seen, with an anguish which he could not always conceal, the apparently rapid extinction of his line; for in that light he regarded only the elder branch, who were the direct descendants of Cosmo, and of whom none remained save Catherine, the Duchess of Urbino, whose father was the great-grandson of Cosmo, and who, although she bore the title of his niece, was in point of fact the grand-daughter of his own cousin-german. The remainder, consisting of himself and his brothers, were illegitimate, and of these the Pope was the eldest; Alessandro, upon whom he had conferred the duchy of Florence, the second; and Hyppolito, whom he had created a cardinal, the third. It will, therefore, readily be believed that Clement reflected with exultation upon the alliance of his niece with a prince of the blood-royal of France, and the two cardinals were earnest in their assurances of the good faith of their sovereign. It is true that Charles V. had previously promised to Alessandro the hand of his daughter

Margaret, but the same stain was affixed to her birth which rested upon his own, whereas the Duc d'Orleans was the legitimate descendant of a line of princes.

The more, therefore, the pontiff reflected upon the proposal of Francis, and the more closely and carefully he compared the advantages which he should secure from his adhesion to either sovereign, the more he became convinced that the period for hesitation was at an end ; and having arrived at this conclusion, the French cardinals had no sooner requested his decision with regard to the meeting proposed by their monarch than he declared his readiness, notwithstanding his advanced age and failing strength, to undertake a journey to Savoy for the purpose of a personal conference. To this place of meeting Francis, however, instantly objected, as, since the death of his mother, he had ceased to maintain any friendly intercourse with her family, who had been enriched and protected by the emperor. Clement then proposed Nice ; but from the same motive the French king equally refused to enter that city unless he were permitted to garrison both the town and the citadel with his own troops. From this concession the Duc de Savoie was dissuaded by Charles V., who was anxious to prevent the meeting ; and ultimately the Pope, who dreaded the failure of his brilliant hopes, declared his willingness even to proceed to France, and selected Marseilles as the place of rendezvous.

Two events had, however, occurred at Milan and

Wurtemberg which were calculated to retard the good understanding between the sovereign-pontiff and the French king, which each was so anxious to establish. Francis, in utter disregard of the treaty of Cambray, had never ceased his intrigues either in Italy or in Germany. He could not forego his desire to secure once more the possession of Milan ; and even while in treaty with the Pope to accomplish the invasion of the duchy, he had endeavoured to renew his alliance with the duke himself.

Lorenzo Sforza, who had suffered severely from the enmity of the Spaniards during the war, had for some time past found himself a mere puppet in their hands. He possessed nothing of sovereignty save the name. He was a mere vassal to the emperor, by whose exorbitant demands he was impoverished, and, moreover, subjected to the surveillance of Antonio da Leyva, between whom and himself there existed an enmity of long standing, and who took a savage delight in exposing him to the most constant and bitter humiliations.

Under these circumstances it will be readily understood that Sforza did not reject the overtures of the French king, for he was too well aware of his inability to protect himself against the exactions of the emperor to lose so favourable an opportunity of securing the alliance of a powerful monarch ; and it was consequently without any hesitation that he consented to permit the return of a Milanese emigrant, who, during the reign of Louis XII., had followed the grand equerry Galéaz San Sévérino to France,

where he had accumulated a large fortune, and even allowed him to act as the secret agent of Francis at his Court. His immense wealth enabled Maraviglia, the individual in question, to entertain the nobles of Milan with a profuse liberality, by which he soon attained great popularity ; and, although many of the courtiers and foreigners who were then sojourning in the duchy were not without suspicion that his favour with Sforza was not altogether unconnected with interests beyond a mere personal regard, the precautions which had been adopted on both sides proved so efficient as to baffle for a time the curiosity of those who sought to elucidate the mystery.

Maraviglia had, on his departure from France, been furnished with letters of credence, which were to be kept secret unless circumstances should imperatively demand their recognition on the part of the French king ; while a second document, which merely recommended him to Sforza as a person worthy of his favour and protection, was also delivered to him, which he was instructed to present to the duke in the presence of his Court.

Francis was, however, equally unfortunate in his selection of an agent and an ally ; for the vanity of Maraviglia was so inflated by the fact of his having become the accredited envoy of a crowned head, that it was not long ere he assumed an authority and importance wholly incompatible with his station as a mere Milanese citizen ; and, adopting a custom which had been introduced into Italy by the Spaniards,

surrounded himself by a set of attendants who recognized no law beyond his pleasure, and were ever ready to seek and even to provoke quarrels in which they affected to uphold the honour of their master, with which Maraviglia soon taught himself to believe that that of the French nation was involved.

The arrogance of the *parvenu* gentleman ere long aroused the ever watchful distrust of the emperor, who complained to Sforza of the insults to which his subjects were exposed by the countenance he had seen fit to afford to an individual who could advance no claim to such a distinction, unless he were aware that he was supported by a higher power; while it was equally evident that should such a power exist, it could only be derived from the King of France; in which case he, the emperor, as the suzerain of the Duke of Milan, demanded the immediate dismissal of Maraviglia from the Court; adding, that should Sforza hesitate to comply with his commands, the projected marriage between himself and the Princess of Denmark was thenceforward at an end.

The faithless ally, upon this threat, proved even a more dangerous confidant than the ostentatious agent; for he did not scruple, while forwarding to the emperor the letter of recommendation which had been given to Maraviglia, to declare that he simply recognized in him a Milanese citizen to whom Francis had requested him to show favour, and that, in acting as he had done, he had merely sought to give a worthy welcome to a person presented to him by

one of the most powerful monarchs of Christendom. Charles V. was not, however, to be so deceived ; he still urged the removal of the obnoxious and mysterious recipient of the duke's favour ; and, ultimately, Sforza assured him that if he would only grant him the respite of a few days, he would convince him of the error of his suspicions.

Precisely at this period one of the lacqueys of Maraviglia, pretending to consider that words had been uttered by the Count Castiglione, a Milanese nobleman, which affected the honour of his master, immediately resented the affront in very unmeasured terms ; but the count, probably considering the menial as too low in rank to permit him to reply to his intemperate address, silently shrugged his shoulders and passed on ; when a second attendant of Maraviglia, either more courageous or more insolent than his comrade, followed up the defiance by pursuing the retiring noble, and declaring that he could not suffer such assertions to be made against the master whose livery he wore, and whom all the Milanese, whatever might be their station, were bound to respect. Castiglione, who felt that his dignity would be involved by a brawl with the lacquey of an adventurer, bade him put up his sword, which he had already unsheathed, asserting that it was not for him to measure weapons with a hired dependent ; and, with a haughtiness and self-possession which only tended to aggravate the passion of his self-constituted opponent, referred him

to a couple of his own followers, to whom he delegated the task of arranging the quarrel.

This richly merited but unpalatable check by no means tended to diminish the rage of the bully by whom he had been defied ; while, on the other hand, the individuals of the count's suite were justly indignant at the disrespect evinced towards their lord ; and accordingly, the two whom, as he proceeded on his way, he left behind him to discuss the merits of the affair, at once flung themselves upon the offender, and would have sacrificed him on the spot had they not been prevented by the bystanders.

When the circumstances of this outbreak were communicated to the duke, he insisted that no further notice should be taken of an affair which had evidently originated in a mistake, and which could profit neither party ; a decision in which Maraviglia instantly acquiesced, declaring that he was unconscious of having a single enemy in Milan, where he had sought to conciliate all with whom he came into contact. But it would appear that Castiglione had received other and more secret instructions ; for it is certain that he afterwards adopted a habit of constantly passing and repassing in front of the residence of Maraviglia, attended by a dozen armed attendants, and even attacked some of his people on one occasion without provocation of any sort. The unfortunate agent, becoming alarmed for his personal safety, at once appealed to the magistrature for protection, but the interference of the civic authorities produced no satisfactory result. Castiglione persisted in his

system of annoyance and aggression, and ultimately lost his life in an attack which he made upon the retainers of Maraviglia, who no sooner saw him fall than they totally routed his followers. This murder, committed in open daylight, and in a city where such enormities were unknown, excited universal indignation. Maraviglia was arrested on the following morning, as well as the whole of his household ; he was tried without delay, and three days afterwards he was decapitated.

The indignation of Francis was unbounded when he was made acquainted with the fate of his equerry and agent ; and he forthwith wrote to the Pope, the emperor, and the Duke of Milan, complaining that he had suffered a crying indignity in the person of his ambassador, the sacred character of whose mission, hitherto respected throughout Europe, had been grossly violated. He also addressed letters of a similar tenor to Ferdinand, King of the Romans, to Henry VIII., and to the Helvetic States, as well as to all the petty European princes, representing the mischievous effect of such a precedent should it be suffered to remain unchastised, and calling upon them to avenge the insult offered to his kingly station and authority.

Sforza, in reply to this expostulation, at once despatched Francesco Taverna, his chancellor, to France, to offer his apologies for what had occurred ; and even carried his audacity so far as to instruct his envoy to declare to the king that he had never regarded Maraviglia in any other light than that of

a simple citizen, and that, consequently, he was totally unprepared to expect that his majesty could feel so great an interest in his fate. He also authorized him to state that he was unaware of his holding official employment, which rendered his person sacred, having always been led to believe that Maraviglia had been induced to return to Milan simply by a desire to expend the money which he had amassed abroad among his own countrymen, although he was cognizant of the fact that his majesty had honoured him with the arrangement of some private business totally unconnected with considerations of policy; but that, had he entertained the most remote idea that the unfortunate gentleman had been officially employed by so great a prince, to whom he himself owed so deep a debt of gratitude and respect, he would have watched over his days with a solicitude which must have averted a catastrophe that he should now never cease to deplore; while, recognizing only in the accused gentleman a subject of his own, he had deemed it his duty to avenge upon him the blood of Count Castiglione, who was one of the officers of his household.

Francis indignantly refused to receive so hypocritical an explanation; and in the presence of the members of the privy council at which Taverna had delivered the exculpatory message of the duke, he sternly asserted that he was able to produce letters which would suffice to show that the duke had individually recognized the official character of the man whom he had, in defiance of the law of nations,

subjected to an ignominious death. This declaration, for which he was wholly unprepared, startled the Milanese chancellor; and when the king proceeded to inquire how it was, if the duke his master had indeed recognized in Maraviglia only a simple subject, that he had been led to violate in his case the usual forms of law, and—instead of affording him time and opportunity to refute the accusations brought against him, or, in default of his being able to do this, of causing him publicly to suffer death under the eyes of the assembled citizens of Milan—had deprived him of all intercourse with the friends by whom he might have been justified, extorted false accusations from his servants under the influence of torture, and finally executed him during the night within the precincts of his prison,—the embarrassed envoy, although esteemed one of the most able advocates of his day, replied falteringly that the arrangement had originated in the deep respect entertained by the duke towards his majesty, whom he was unwilling to expose to the indignity which the public execution of one of his recognized agents would have appeared to sanction.

“Enough,” said Francis, with a stern gesture; “your reply is a sufficient admission that the official character of my murdered ambassador was fully recognized by the Duke of Milan. And now, sir, bear to your master the plain assurance that if he do not afford to me the satisfaction which I shall not be slow in demanding, I shall know how to render justice to myself.”

As the reward of his unmanly and treacherous condescension, the emperor fulfilled his promise to Sforza ; and notwithstanding the weak state of his health, and the premature decrepitude which compelled him to lean upon a staff throughout the whole duration of the nuptial ceremony, he bestowed on him, in April 1534, the hand of his niece Christina.¹ From the period of his marriage, however, Sforza rapidly declined until he became totally infirm, and on the 24th of October in the following year he died. As he was the last representative of the Sforza family, Don Antonio da Leyva took possession of the duchy in the name of the emperor, and the young widow returned to Spain.

Meanwhile Ferdinand, King of the Romans, to whom his brother Charles V. had entrusted the government of Germany during his own sojourn in Italy and Spain, had renewed a long-enduring quarrel with the young Christopher, Duke of Wurtemberg ; and this prince applied to Francis for his support against the aggressions of the emperor, representing that for more than seventeen years Duke Ulric, his father, had been dispossessed of his inheritance, and reminding him that by his marriage with the Dowager-Queen of Portugal, the sister of the emperor and the King of the Romans, who had taken possession of his duchy, he had the honour to be allied to his majesty through the Princess Sabine, his mother, who was the niece of Maximilian.

¹ The Princess Christina was the daughter of the Archduchess Elizabeth of Austria, and of Christiern II., King of Denmark.

Francis at first refused to interfere in a misunderstanding which he declared to be more personal than political ; but Martin du Bellay, who felt a lively interest in the young and princely applicant, suffering as he was from a spoliation entailed upon him by an ancient feud, with which he had been totally unconnected, conceived an expedient by which he was enabled to assist him without compromising his sovereign, and accordingly agreed to lend him a hundred thousand crowns on the security of the county of Montbelliard, ostensibly as its purchaser, but in reality to enable him to pay his troops and to raise new levies. With this assistance, and the aid of the Protestant princes, whose faith he had openly embraced, the duke was enabled to possess himself of Lauffen, and ultimately, with little delay, to make himself master of the duchy of Wurtemberg, where one of his first acts of sovereignty was to establish the reformed religion.

Nevertheless, the war in Germany, which had been considered as an inevitable result of these events, was still delayed. Ferdinand, instead of resenting a defeat which he must have keenly felt, availed himself of the opportunity to enter into a fresh treaty with the league of Smalkalden ; and on the 29th of June 1534 the peace of Nuremberg was confirmed.

This arrangement was not, however, yet concluded when the Pope commenced his journey to Marseilles ; and had not his personal ambition been involved in the interview to which he had so readily

acceded, the two events here detailed were calculated to render it of a less pacific character than he had originally anticipated. But Clement VII. was already an old man, and still more aged by infirmity than by years. His ambition had outlasted his susceptibility, and in the advancement of his family he forgot all more politic considerations. He was aware of the support which had been afforded to the Protestants of Germany by the monarch with whom he was about to treat ; he had been apprized that he had already threatened to invade Lombardy in order to avenge the death of Maraviglia ; nor was he ignorant of the close alliance which Francis had formed with Henry VIII., and which threatened the annihilation of the papal supremacy ; but he cast off these memories to reflect only upon the brilliant alliance which had been offered to his niece. The evil effects likely to result from the political measures of the French king failed to turn him from his purpose—they regarded rather his successors than himself ; whereas the marriage of Catherine was a personal triumph within his very grasp, and almost independent of the future.

Under the influence of this all-absorbing passion Clement VII. accordingly persisted in his purpose, and embarked at Pisa for Marseilles on the 4th of October, accompanied by a fleet of French galleys under the command of the Duc d'Aubigny. The duke himself had, however, preceded him by several days, and had already landed with Catherine de' Medici, whom papal etiquette did not permit to

travel with her uncle. This delicate and honourable mission had consequently been entrusted to the Duc d'Aubigny, not only as a proof of the personal regard and confidence of the king, but also because that noble had married her maternal aunt, and had thus become her relative.

The arrival of the pontiff in the port was announced by the discharge of three hundred cannon from the batteries, and the salute was returned by the guns of the vessels. The Maréchal de Montmorency received him on his landing, and conducted him in a costly litter, surrounded by pages and men-at-arms, to the splendid residence which had been prepared for him in one of the faubourgs, and on the following morning he made his public entry into the city with great pomp and ceremony. At the gates he was met by all the ecclesiastics of the diocese headed by their prelate; by the Abbot of St. Victor and his community; by the judicial authorities; by the great nobles who had been assembled to welcome him; and he was immediately followed by the king himself, who had arrived at Marseilles only a few hours previously, by the queen, and by all the principal members of the Court. The houses in the streets traversed by the two potentates were hung with tapestry and silks of gorgeous colours, and the pavement was thickly strewn with rich autumnal flowers and branches of odoriferous shrubs.

Delighted to co-operate with her royal husband in every measure likely to ensure the peace of

Europe, and equally so at the prospect of welcoming to her affection a new friend and daughter, the reception given by Eleonora to the beautiful girl, who, on descending from her litter at the approach of the royal party, knelt to make her obeisance to her future stepmother, was full of dignified and unaffected kindness; and she had no sooner, on withdrawing her hand from the lips of Catherine, impressed a kiss upon her brow, than she compelled her to enter her own litter, and thus side by side they proceeded to the residence which had been prepared for the reception of the queen, and where a suite of apartments had been reserved for the young duchess and her attendants.

The pope and the king occupied two houses directly opposite to each other, and of the same dimensions, which were connected by a temporary gallery flung across the street, and converted into a magnificent saloon hung with tapestry and cloth of gold, which afforded them private access to each other at all hours.

Nor was the triumph of Clement VII. merely a public one; for Francis had no sooner introduced him into the splendid hall in which their conferences were to be held than, notwithstanding the pledge which he had given to Henry VIII., that, like himself, he would never again recognize in the person of the Pope any higher dignity than that of Bishop of Rome, he humbly bent the knee before him, and kissed in succession his foot, his hand, and his cheek; after which he presented to him his

eldest son, who in like manner knelt and saluted him. The dauphin was replaced in his turn by the two younger princes, who kissed his feet and his hands; and they were followed by the great dignitaries of the Court, who kissed his feet only.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Bishop of Paris declared, in the name of his sovereign, "that the very Christian king, as the elder son of the Church, recognised his holiness in all humility and devotion as the pontiff and true vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ, revering him as the successor of St. Peter, and offering him obedience and fidelity, pledging himself with all his power to uphold the safety of his holiness and of the holy apostolical see, as all his predecessors had done before him."

It had been originally intended that this address should be delivered by the President Poyer, afterwards Chancellor of France; but this dignitary, although recognized as the most eloquent speaker of his time, was comparatively ignorant of the Latin language, and could not undertake the duty until by close study he had rendered himself able to repeat the discourse which had been prepared for him. As it was, however, necessary to ascertain the feeling of the pontiff with regard to the subjects which were to be mooted in this public address, the master of the Court ceremonies waited upon him for instructions, when all the preparatory labour of the unhappy president was rendered useless by the declaration of Clement that he was anxious to avoid, on such an occasion, every allusion either to the emperor or any

other Christian prince which might be construed into an affront ; and that he should prefer not being called upon to listen to any save a purely theological oration.

In this dilemma Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, was nominated to replace him, which he did upon the instant with an eloquence and ability worthy of his reputation.

A splendid banquet was then served, after which the pope and the king retired to confer together on the various subjects of importance which they were met to discuss ; and during their interview Francis warmly urged the pontiff to recognize and sanction the divorce of Henry VIII., assuring him that the English monarch was actuated only by motives of conscience in seeking to repudiate a princess whose conduct alike as a wife and a mother had been irreproachable. Clement, however, refused to lend himself to what he stigmatized as an act of tyranny and injustice, for, satisfied as he was that he had secured the friendship of Francis, he was still unwilling to incur the enmity of the emperor ; while the royal intercessor, on his side, considered it equally inexpedient to inform his guest that he had pledged himself to the English monarch not to consent to the marriage of his son with Catherine de' Medici until he had wrested from the Pope a consent to his own divorce. From this difficulty Francis was, however, extricated in an unexpected manner, for in an audience granted by the pontiff to Bishop Bonner, who had been despatched to France by Henry VIII.



JANE AUSTEN, ESQ. OF THE COUNTY OF SURREY.

ENGRAVED BY J.W. COOK FROM A PORTRAIT, SUPPOSED TO BE HERSELF.

LONDON: PRINTED BY D. BAYNE, 1801.



for that purpose, the prelate boldly announced that his sovereign had appealed from the decision of his holiness to that of the general council ; upon which the French king, rejoiced to be emancipated from the performance of his promise, and to find himself relieved from a responsibility by which his personal views were frustrated, immediately declared that he could not sanction the affront which had been offered to the head of the Church by such a determination ; and that, although he should ever regard the English monarch as a brother, he could not uphold him, or any other prince, in a matter which involved the interests of the religion that he professed.

Thus unexpectedly liberated from his engagement, Francis found himself free to negotiate the preliminaries of the marriage of his son Henri, Duc d'Orleans, with Catherine de' Medici, which, for the misfortune of France, was finally arranged at this period ; the prince not having yet attained his fifteenth year, and the niece of the Pope being his junior by eighteen months. The apparent dowry of the bride was by no means a splendid one to bring to a royal house, for it consisted only of a hundred thousand crowns and the French estates which she inherited from her mother, Madelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne, which were of about equal value. This fact furnished abundant amusement to the French courtiers, who, little foreseeing the frightful effects which were to result from this ill-omened alliance, dwelt upon the paucity of her portion and the extraordinary infatuation of the king, who might have

commanded for his son the hand of a princess, with a duchy for her dowry. Some among them even went so far as to express to sundry of the papal officers their astonishment that the niece of a sovereign-pontiff should possess no greater fortune than the heiress of a French finance-minister; but they were speedily and agreeably silenced by Philipppo Strozzi, the ambassador of Clement, who, in reply to a remark of this nature said with a quiet smile, "You appear to forget, gentlemen, that she also adds to the crown of France three jewels of inestimable value—Genoa, Milan, and Naples."

The emperor subsequently heard and registered this incautious and ill-judged rejoinder, but even before he was apprized of its having been made he had become alarmed, and wrote to the pontiff entreating him not to consent to a marriage so inimical to the interests of Italy; or, in the event of his persisting in the alliance, urging him to oblige the king to give a pledge not to make any fresh attempts upon that country, to confirm the treaties of Madrid and Cambray, and to consent to the convocation of the council. Furthermore, he exhorted him to interfere in the matter of the English divorce, representing the extent of the injury which was meditated against his own aunt; but Clement, in reply, declined to commit himself by making such a promise, declaring that the French king had done him so much honour by offering the hand of his second son to a member of his own house, that he was not in a position to impose conditions upon him, although he was ready

to exert all his influence to secure the peace of Italy.

With this answer the emperor was compelled to rest satisfied, although he would doubtless have used more strenuous arguments had he been aware that when the Duc d'Aubigny had been commissioned to negotiate the marriage, the exultation of the Pope was so great that, in addition to the dowry in specie to which allusion has already been made, he agreed to include in the marriage portion of his niece the provinces of Reggio, Modena, Rubeira, Pisa, Livorna, Parma, and Placenza; to unite his own army with that of Francis to regain for her the duchy of Urbino, which had been wrested from the Medici after the death of Leo X.; to assist him in the recovery of the Milanese; and, finally, to unite all these important territories upon the heads of the Duc d'Orleans and his bride. Of this private arrangement Charles was, however, totally ignorant; and feeling that the French king must have had some powerful motive for proposing so disproportionate an alliance, he did not hesitate to attribute the concession to a projected invasion of the Milanese.

Presents of great value having been exchanged, and the necessary preparations completed, the marriage was eventually solemnized by the Pope himself, on the 29th of October, with a splendour which formed a strong contrast to the hurried and undignified ceremony that had so recently made the gentle Eleanora queen of France. The extreme personal beauty of the young couple, aged respectively fifteen

and thirteen years, the magnificence of their apparel, the sumptuousness of the monarch, his queen, and their united Courts, the ecclesiastical pomp, the flashing of jewels under the glare of innumerable tapers, and the presence of the supreme pontiff himself, all tended to render this, destined to be a fatal day to France, one of the greatest brilliance and gorgeousness.

On the return of the illustrious bridal party to the temporary palace of the king, whither they were followed by the acclamations of the populace, who energetically shouted *Noël* for their young prince and his fair bride—whom they little suspected was one day fated to become the curse of the nation over which she was called to rule—a presentation was held in the hall of tapestry, at which the king invested four of the papal dignitaries with the order of St. Michael; while Clement, at his express request, created four new French cardinals, among whom was Odet de Châtillon, the nephew of Anne de Montmorency, who had only just attained his thirteenth year, and who, notwithstanding this extraordinary elevation, subsequently embraced the reformed religion.

The marriage festivities were prolonged until the 12th of November, when the Pope and his suite, having taken leave of the French Court, departed from Marseilles for Civita Vecchia on board the same vessels by which they had been conveyed thither; but on his arrival in that port Clement dismissed the Duc d'Aubigny and his fleet with a profusion of both gifts and protestations, and on the 6th of December

embarked in the galleys of Andrea Doria, who was still in the service of the emperor—a stroke of policy by which he hoped to disarm the jealousy of Charles.

The departure of the pontiff from the city was followed by that of the king and queen ; and in the course of a few days the whole of the royal train were on their way to Amboise, and Marseilles was once more shorn of its temporary splendour.

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